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SCUBA DIVING

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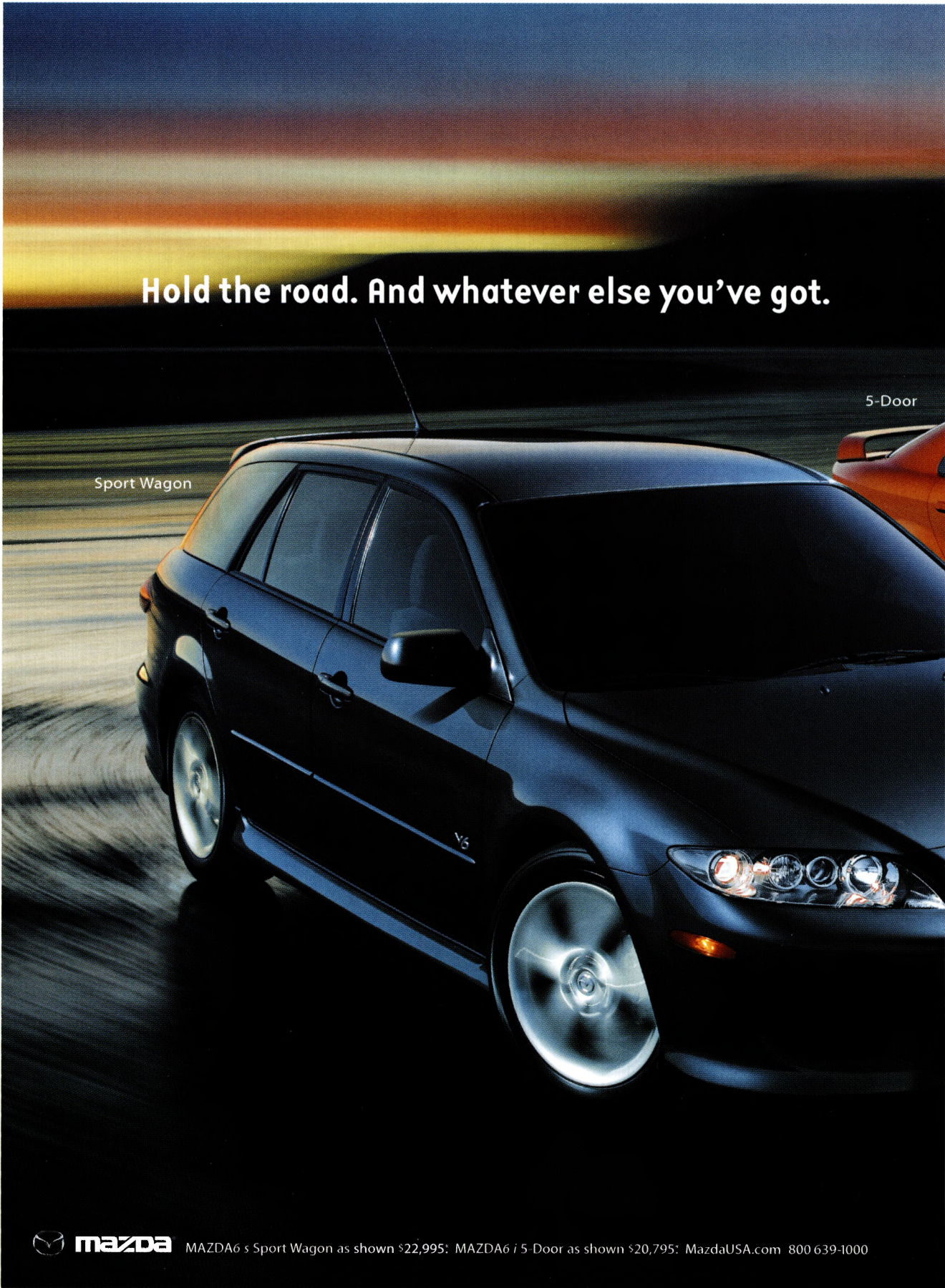
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INSTANT ENERGY
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MAY 2004

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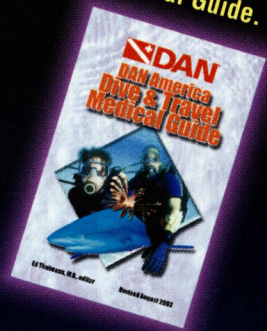
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Jeff Tillinghast leads Whitman students on a dive trip to Hornby Island, British Columbia.

(EDITOR'S NOTE)

Class Act

Walla Walla's most enthusiastic diver gets a free ride.

IN THE HIGH DESERT of eastern Washington state, scuba divers are about as common as penguins. So when Jeff Tillinghast e-mailed his fellow students at Walla Walla's Whitman College looking for a weekend dive buddy his freshman year, he had low expectations. To his surprise, he got an in-box full of responses from interested students. The only problem was that none of them was certified. "Everybody was interested, but most of them wanted to know if they had to have any previous dive experience," Jeff says.

It didn't take long for Jeff to realize that this glass was half-full. He scrapped his plans for a weekend dive trip to Puget Sound and started organizing the first of what would become many open-water certification courses for students at the college. Tillinghast spent the next three years leading carloads of Whitman students on the five-hour drive to Seattle to perform their certification pool work and checkout dives. "The first class went out in

the second week in January. At first, they were picturing tropical diving and coral reefs, but when they got out on the water in Puget Sound, they were getting snowed on," Tillinghast says. "I was amazed they didn't lynch me."

After that first successful course, Jeff founded the Deep Onion Dive Club, which quickly became one of the most active in the state. To the new divers at Whitman College, Jeff Tillinghast has been a leader and an inspiration. One thing he has not been, however, is a dive instructor.

Scuba Diving, SSI, NAUI and Bob Brayman's International Diving Career Institute established the Jon Hardy Scholarship to cover the costs of a full instructor course for one deserving diver. The scholarship was established to honor the memory of Jon Hardy, the founder and first director of ScubaLab, who died of cancer in 2001. *Scuba Diving* is pleased to award the Jon Hardy Scholarship to Jeff Tillinghast, who exhibits many of the qualities that made Jon Hardy a leader in the industry—focus, dedication and an ability to inspire others through his contagious enthusiasm for the sport.

Jeff will graduate with a music-theory degree this month, but plans to put a teaching career on hold for a while to pursue diving. With any luck, he'll end up in a destination that offers better diving than Walla Walla does. But, then again, it probably wouldn't matter either way. —BUCK BUTLER

(ONLINE)

Bahamas Getaway Giveaway

Need a dive vacation? The Islands of the Bahamas and the Bahamas Diving Association are going to send two lucky divers on a seven-night, two-island dive getaway. Go to www.scubadiving.com/bahamascontest and enter to win the Bahamas Island-Hopping Dive Adventure for two.

(CORRECTION)

TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE

The price of the Sherwood Scuba Outback BC published in *Scuba Diving's* March 2004 BC review was incorrect. The correct suggested retail price is \$600. At this price, the BC would not be a Best Buy.

(LETTERS)

And Another Lesson

I ROUTINELY READ your "Lessons for Life" to see what I can learn and share from them. I am a Public Safety Scuba Instructor, training a metro-wide dive rescue team in Denver, Colo. Your most recent article, "Speed Kills" (March '03), misses one crucial element of diving safety. One paramount concept that I impress upon my students is the huge percentage of diving fatalities in which divers are found still



wearing their weights. We drill in the pool during initial certification, training again when we advance from weight belts to the weight harnesses we use with dry suits. Our divers are then again mandated to practice weight ditching at least twice per year to maintain skills. While it is not clear from your article if this diver was wearing any weights in addition to his twin tanks, it still should be stressed that achieving positive buoyancy in a near-surface emergency can be the key to saving a diver's life.

Dan Goldan, Metro Dive Rescue, Denver, Colo.

All That and a Bag of Tips

I JUST WANT TO thank you for the gear bag you sent me for participating in an online survey. Not only do you folks put out the best dive magazine on the market, but you also produce a terrific web site where divers can discuss diving, learn new things, meet new people and just have fun. And above all that, you give away prizes for enjoying your web site. How great is that? I have enjoyed your magazine for many years, and the good Lord willing, I will enjoy it for many more. **Edward Gibson, Beacon Falls, Conn.**

(HOW TO REACH US)

We want to know what's on your mind. Here are three easy ways to tell us:

E-MAIL: edit@scubadiving.com

FAX: (912) 351-0735

MAIL: Editor, Rodale's Scuba Diving, 6600 Abercorn St., Suite 208, Savannah, GA 31405

(LIST)

TOP 10 THINGS TO SAY TO AVOID BEING BUDDIED-UP WITH SOMEONE

#10

"Damn, I forgot my corrective lenses. Can you point me to the water?"

#9: "Damn it! I've spilled fish blood all over my wetsuit."

#8

"My last dive was a year ago ... in my neighbor's backyard pool."

#7

"I'm really surprised the doctors will still let me dive after my last stroke."

#6: "The bends aren't that bad! My regular buddy should be out of the hospital anytime now."

#5

"Yeah, I've been working on my air consumption. Now I can stay at 40 feet for 10 minutes!"

#4

"Hey, I'll bet I've spent more time in a recompression chamber than you have!"

#3

"Don't worry about my mouth sores—we probably won't have to share air anyway."

#2

"Certification? Didn't that come with the wetsuit rental?"

#1: "Wow, that's amazing! Lose one buddy and the divemaster just hands over a free replacement!"

(From the users of www.scubadiving.com. For more Top 10 lists, go to www.scubadiving.com)

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We've got just what you're looking for, whether it's animal encounters, walls, wrecks, reefs—or a beach chair at the water's edge.

RODALE'S SCUBA DIVING

INTERNATIONAL
DIVE TRAVEL DIRECTORY

62 376 Dive Deals

Our annual guide to the best dive travel opportunities in the world includes everything you need to make your next trip your best one ever. You'll find contact information and dive package deals from operators, live-aboards and dive travel specialists.

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Cover photo by Stephen Frink.

RODALE'S
SCUBA
DIVING

GREAT DIVES

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35 DRIVE & DIVE Between Seattle and the vast Pacific, Puget Sound offers calm water for divers and giant cephalopods.

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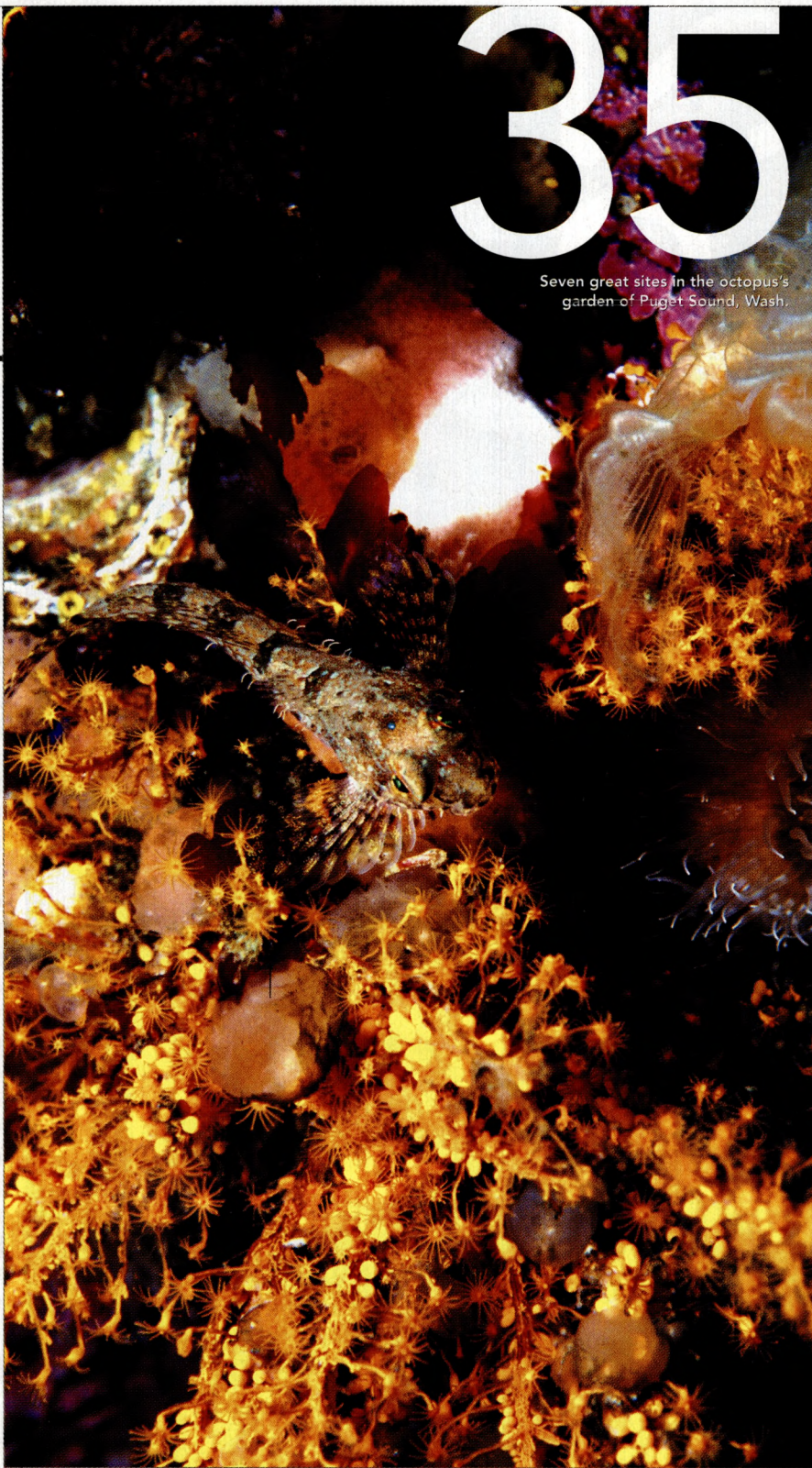
52 INSTANT ENERGY For fin-kick-ing power, pack a portable pick-me-up on your next dive.

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56 GEAR TO GO Check out this collection of hit-the-road dive gear designed specifically for the traveling diver.

35

Seven great sites in the octopus's garden of Puget Sound, Wash.



5 TALK 136 LOOK

HENRY POWERS

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Health Editor **SELENE YEAGER**
Contributing Editors **PAUL KVINTA**
LANCE LEONHARDT
Librarian **LYNN DONCHES**

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

GEORGIANNE BRADLEY, JAY IRELAND
JESSE CANCELMO, STEPHEN FRINK

MAIN EDITORIAL OFFICE

6600 ABERCORN ST., SUITE 208
SAVANNAH, GA 31405
Tel: (912) 351-0855
Editorial Fax: (912) 351-0735
E-mail: EDIT@SCUBADIVING.COM
Web: WWW.SCUBADIVING.COM

RODALE SPORTS & FITNESS GROUP

Vice President, Circulation **JOYCE SHIRER**
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SALES OFFICES

Director, Direct Sales **PHIL TRINKLE**

SAVANNAH, GA

Tel: (912) 351-0855
Advertising Fax: (912) 351-0890
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Publisher **DANE B. FARNUM**

dfarnum@scubadiving.com
Territory Manager **STEVEN "IKE" EISENBERG**
(912) 351-6224 seisenberg@scubadiving.com
Territory Manager **NICK LUCEY**
(912) 353-5245 nlucey@scubadiving.com

CALIFORNIA

Advertising Director **DEBBIE EDWARDS**
(858) 551-0430 FAX: (858) 551-0615
dedwards@scubadiving.com
Territory Manager **ANDREW WIENS**
(323) 255-2997 FAX: (323) 255-4194
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NEW YORK

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Travis.Gainsley@Rodale.com

DETROIT

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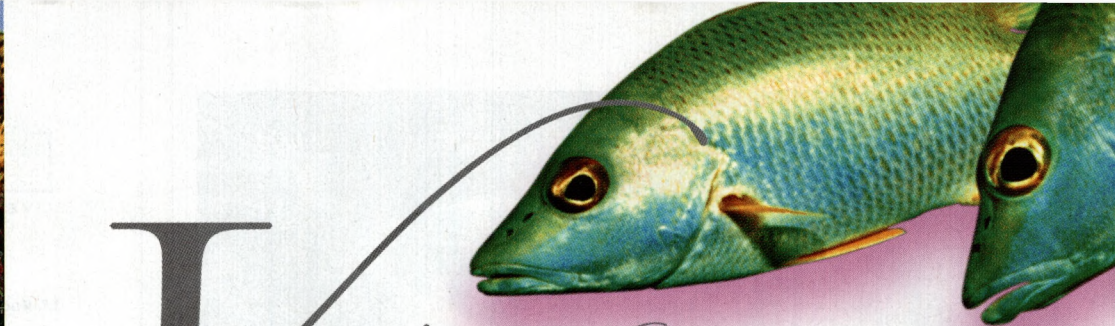
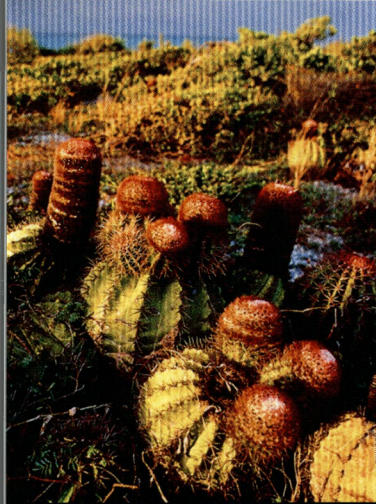


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Rodale's Scuba Diving Volume 13, Number 4, Issue 116



You're not dreaming You're in Puerto Rico

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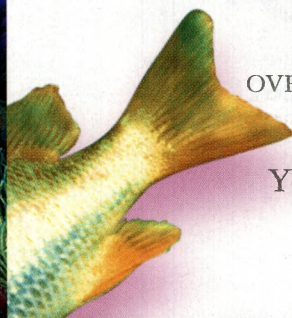
JOURNEY THROUGH A MAZE OF ANCIENT CAVERNS, ALLEYWAYS, AND

TUNNELS. SPY ON AN OCTOPUS. FOLLOW A SEA TURTLE. THEN AFTER

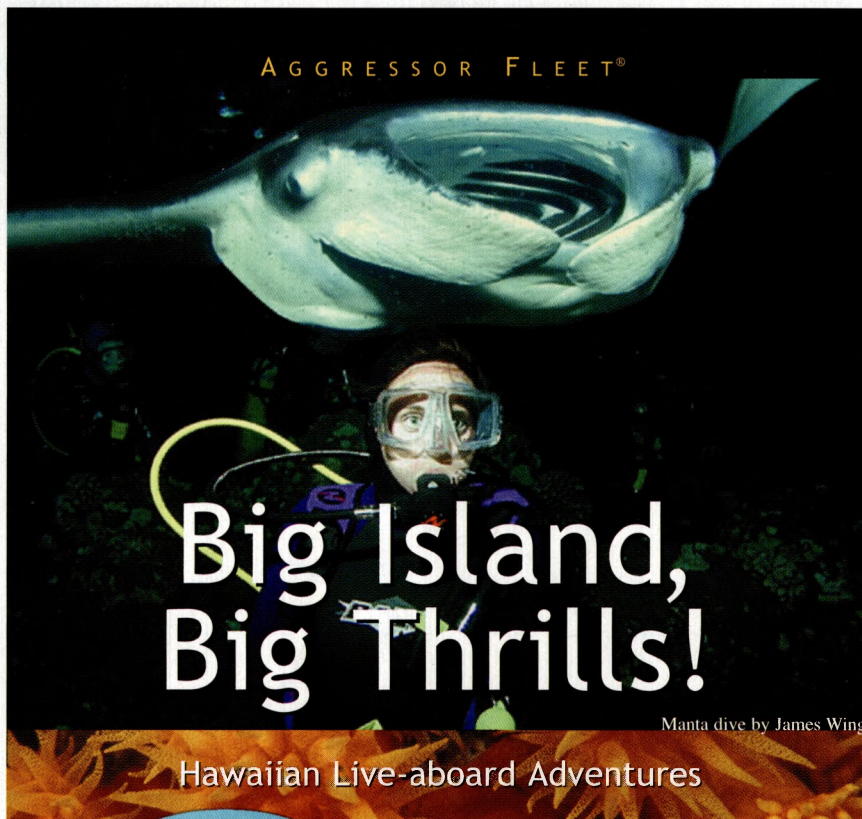
SUNDOWN, SIT BACK TO AN EXQUISITE DINNER BY CANDLELIGHT

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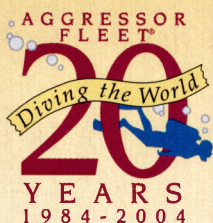
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THE GREAT Dives

DIVE OF THE MONTH

MARATUA CHANNEL, INDONESIA Swift currents funnel water and loads of fish into U-shaped Maratua Channel northeast of Borneo, where predators hang in the water column waiting for their next helping of fast food. Among the hungry hordes, you'll find super-sized seven-foot barracuda, six-foot groupers, big nurse sharks, and eagle and marble rays.



A canopy of chevron barracuda waits at the mouth of the rushing channel off Maratua Island.



(BONAIRE)

Our Confidence

UNLIKE "ARTIFICIAL" wrecks that are cleaned and precisely placed under water in many dive destinations, the latest addition to Bonaire's sunken fleet sank the old-fashioned way: unexpectedly. Lying 150 feet west of the beach at Harbour Village Resort, the 60-foot *Our Confidence* came to rest in 55 feet of water in August 2003 after a varied maritime career. *Our Confidence* began as a Danish fishing boat, then served during World War II as a transport for refugees. Her final assignment was as a Caribbean interisland freighter. She now rests serenely on a sloping sand and coral-rubble bottom, regularly circled by one big snapper and divers exploring the island's newest wreck.



Twenty lazy fin-kicks from shore, you'll find the mast
of *Our Confidence* 22 feet below the surface.



Gem-like corals and sponges adorn the *Hickory*, a fitting end for this former treasure salvager.

(DOMINICAN REPUBLIC)

The *Hickory*

If the *Hickory* weren't currently sitting on the seafloor in La Caleta National Park, she might still be searching for other shipwrecks. Before the 140-foot steel vessel was scuttled here in the Boca Chica region of the Dominican Republic in 1986, she did just that, plying the waters of the Caribbean in a quest for sunken treasure. Now she rests upright in 60 feet of water, her bow brilliantly jeweled with yellow tube sponges and exceedingly friendly sergeant majors that often get handouts from divers. Schools of blackbar soldierfish claim the storm-shattered wheelhouse, guarding their hideout from angelfish, glass-eye sweepers and squirrelfish.

SD

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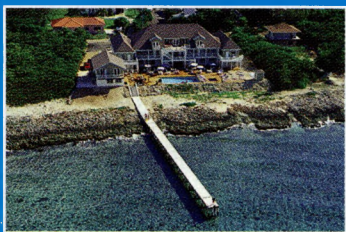
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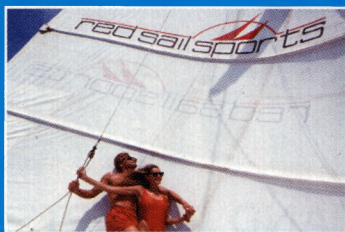
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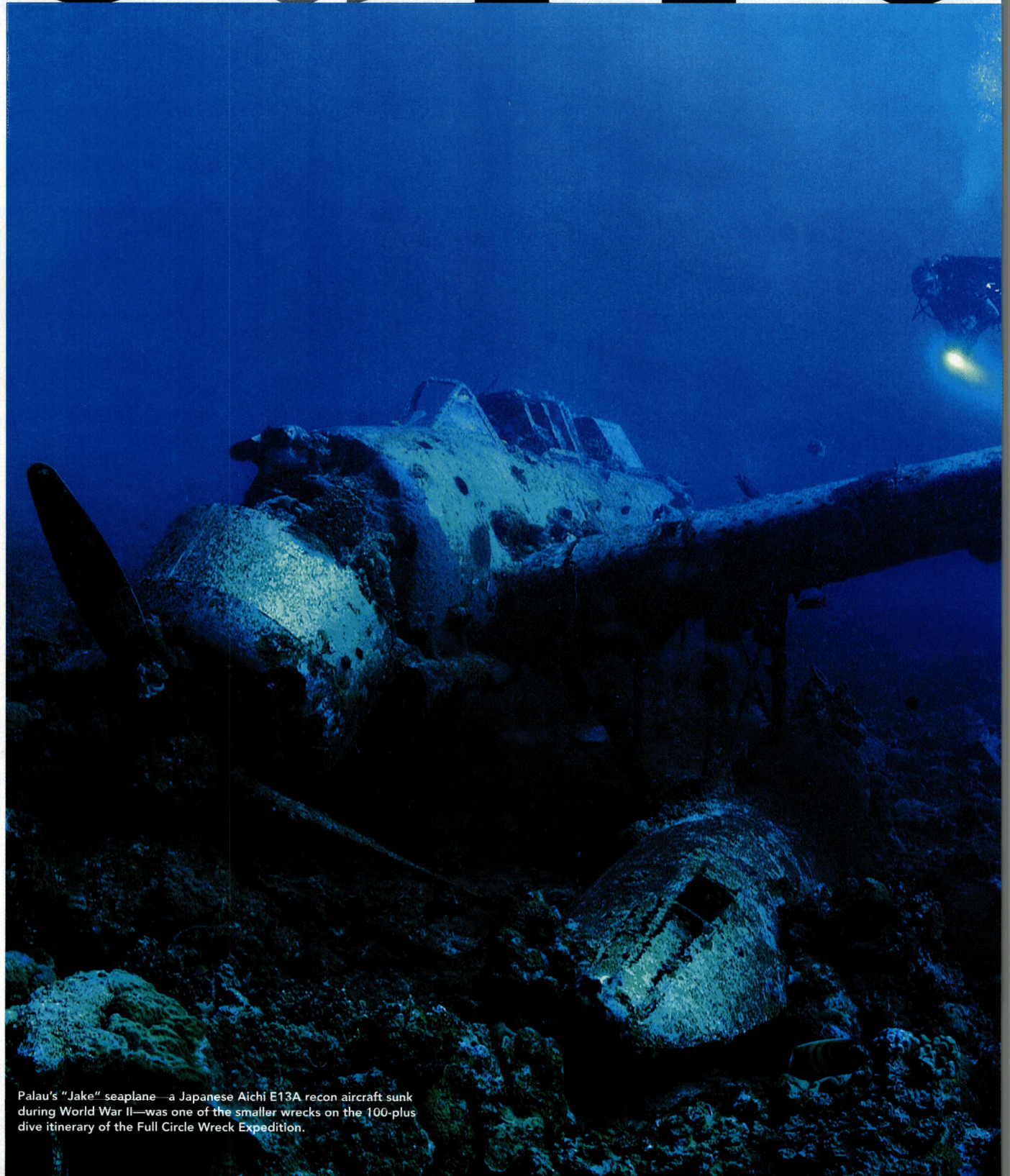
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Curre



Palau's "Jake" seaplane—a Japanese Aichi E13A recon aircraft sunk during World War II—was one of the smaller wrecks on the 100-plus dive itinerary of the Full Circle Wreck Expedition.



n t s

(TRAVEL)

Around the World in 100 Dives

Depending on your perspective, it was either the ultimate wreck diving vacation, or the endless trip from hell. At times, it was probably both.

Last fall, eight intrepid divers ponied up \$23,000, then left their homes, jobs and families for two-and-a-half months in search of some of the world's greatest shipwrecks. The Full Circle Wreck Expedition left London in October and headed roughly east, passing through the North Sea, the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, the South Pacific and the Coral Sea before ending up in the Caribbean on the wreck of the *Bianca C* off Grenada.

In all, the divers made more than 100 dives on such storied wrecks as the 624-foot cruise liner *President Coolidge* in Vanuatu and the World War II freighter *Thistlegorm* in the Red Sea. On the wreck of the *Lementov* in New Zealand, the group shared the water with a pod of curious killer whales.

But it wasn't all action and adventure. Each diver was allowed just two bags for all their clothes, cameras and dive gear for the entire trip, which encompassed 38 international flights and all the usual travel hassles.

"There's kind of two elements to these trips," says expedition leader Monty Halls. "There's the fantastically exciting, once-in-a-lifetime experience of brushing the flank of a great white shark as it swims past you or seeing dolphins or experiencing the incredible wrecks. But there's also sitting on your suitcase in the Manila airport at three in the morning with a slightly dodgy tummy and someone else on the expedition getting on your nerves."

Sound like fun? Halls and his team are offering another round-the-world adventure this fall. To find out more, visit www.fullcircle-expeditions.com. —MICHAEL JORDAN

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAN BURTON

If you've ever spent the first two days of your Roatan vacation diving with rental gear while your bags sat idly by in San Pedro Sula, take heart. Continental Airlines plans to begin nonstop Saturday flights between Houston and Roatan this summer. If the new route is approved by aviation officials, the company will begin flying a 737 with seating for 124 eager divers on June 12. For more information, visit www.continental.com.

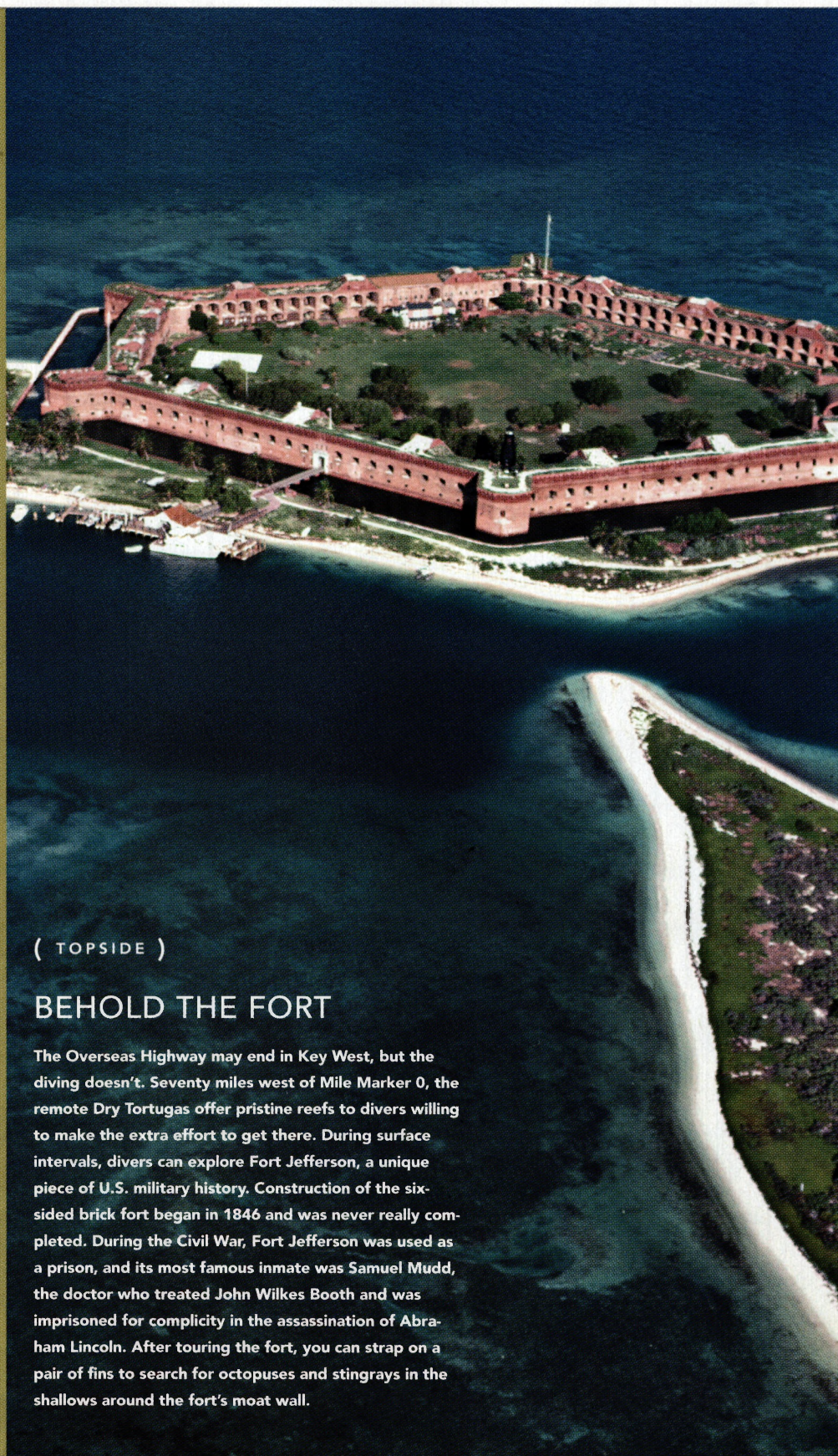
(BUZZ)

The Plane! The Plane!

(TOPSIDE)

BEHOLD THE FORT

The Overseas Highway may end in Key West, but the diving doesn't. Seventy miles west of Mile Marker 0, the remote Dry Tortugas offer pristine reefs to divers willing to make the extra effort to get there. During surface intervals, divers can explore Fort Jefferson, a unique piece of U.S. military history. Construction of the six-sided brick fort began in 1846 and was never really completed. During the Civil War, Fort Jefferson was used as a prison, and its most famous inmate was Samuel Mudd, the doctor who treated John Wilkes Booth and was imprisoned for complicity in the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. After touring the fort, you can strap on a pair of fins to search for octopuses and stingrays in the shallows around the fort's moat wall.



(BIOLOGY)

Pull My Fin Despite what you might think of your dive buddy, a recent study documents the first known case of an underwater species that may actually communicate through its hindquarters.

While studying how herrings react to certain sounds like the call of a killer whale, a team of Canadian and British scientists found that the little fish have a habit of squeezing gas bubbles out of their anal pores, making a distinctive sound. An individual herring is more likely to produce these noises—dubbed Fast Repetitive Tick sounds, or FRTs—when other herrings are close by, which raises the possibility that they play a role in communication. The sounds also increase at night. “They can’t see each other, therefore there’s a good reason to make noise then,” says lead researcher Dr. Ben Wilson from the University of British Columbia, Vancouver. “Or alternatively, it could just be that’s when they deal with their buoyancy.”

Next time you hear a distinctive raspberry under water, it could be a herring trying to tell you something—or maybe just your dive buddy “dealing with his buoyancy.”

(SCHOLARSHIP)

Roam Where You Want To

Where will the world’s sweetest diving scholarship take you?

Mesmerized, it was all Kerry Nickols could do to return the inquisitive stare coming from the big eyes of the imposing Steller’s sea lion. Nickols was dry suit diving off Juneau, Alaska, collecting samples to study resident fish sheltered by kelp fronds in Auke Bay. She had heard the rumors, but up close, the endangered Steller’s was like “California sea lions on steroids,” says Nickols.

Diving daily in 54-degree water was just one of many experiences 23-year-old Nickols has had since she won the 2003 Our World Underwater North American scholarship. The scholarship gives winners the chance to roam the earth for one year searching for the perfect job under water. “It’s not about how many dives I can rack up in a year,” says Nickols. “It’s about making connections with people that will help me continue my journey into the future.”

The scholarship is available to certified scuba divers who have not earned a graduate degree and have a minimum of 25 open-water dives. Applicants must be older than 21 but not yet 25 by March 1 of the scholarship year. The application deadline is Nov. 30, 2004, for the North American scholarship and Dec. 31, 2004, for the British scholarship. Heads up: You must submit your past year’s dive log in addition to completing the application and rounding up your recommendations. To find out more about Our World Underwater Scholarship Society, go to www.owuscholarship.org. —GINA MARSHALL



(TRAVEL)

Shell Collectors

Next time, try something from the gift shop.

When airport security officials in Vanuatu told two unidentified Australian divers they wouldn't be taking home the 15 souvenir shells collected during their vacation, the divers got pretty steamed. But they calmed down when they learned their souvenirs were not only illegal to take, but could have destroyed the 737 they were boarding.

The items in the divers' possession were 15 anti-aircraft shells sunk off Espiritu Santo during World War II. The pair illegally collected the ordnance from the wreck of a Douglas SBD Dauntless dive bomber and removed the projectiles before stuffing the shells into their checked luggage. The casings, which still contained explosive primers and some gunpowder, were detected by scanning equipment just before being loaded onto the plane.

"We were horrified when the shells came up on the screen," said Desmond Ross, chief executive of the Port Villa airport. "Old ammunition can be very unstable and, when removed from the water, is very dangerous."

The shells were confiscated, and the divers allowed to go on their way with just a warning, though they could have faced charges for removing artifacts and attempting to board with dangerous items.



Two Aussie divers tried to board an airliner with World War II anti-aircraft shells they recovered in Vanuatu.



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(GEAR)

SHERWOOD AND GENESIS RECALL BC INFLATORS

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Sherwood Scuba and Genesis Scuba have recalled the power inflators on eight BC models after discovering a manufacturing glitch that could cause the inflator valves to stick open.

The problem lies with a molding variation in a seal within the inflator valve, "and although this variation is not present in every power inflator, we are requiring that all BCs manufactured within a limited time period be updated with new power inflator valve assemblies," according to the recall announcement.

Owners of affected models (see list) should stop using their BCs immediately

and return them to an authorized dealer for the free upgrade. Affected models from both brands have serial numbers between 90010001 and 930350167, and either a black or gray inflator button. Updated BC inflators will have a blue button.

SHERWOOD Silhouette, Magnum, Avid, Luna and Freedom models purchased after July 1, 2003.

GENESIS Cayman, Cobra, Athena and Phantom models purchased after July 1, 2003.

For more information, call toll-free (800) 815-9740, ext. 233, or visit www.sherwood-scuba.com or www.genesscuba.com.

(QUOTE)

Because the animation is so lifelike, there were moments when what was on-screen blended seamlessly with the underwater environment.

—BRITISH DIVER LLOYD SCOTT WHO WATCHED FINDING NEMO ON AN EIGHT- BY SIX-FOOT ACRYLIC SCREEN IN THE ATLANTIC TANK OF THE LONDON AQUARIUM.

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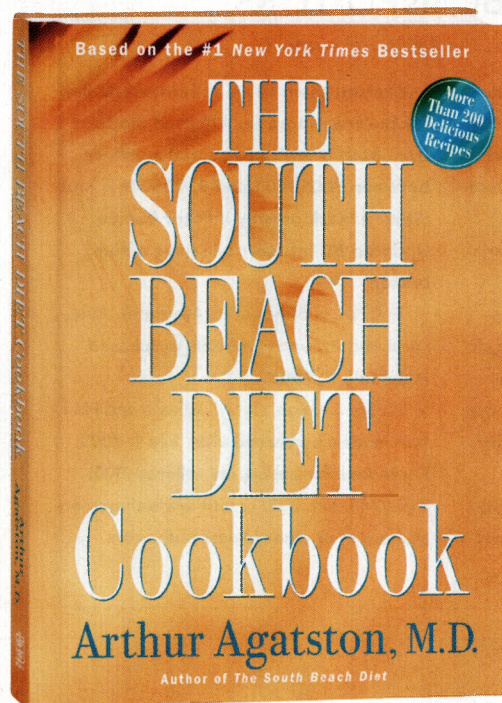


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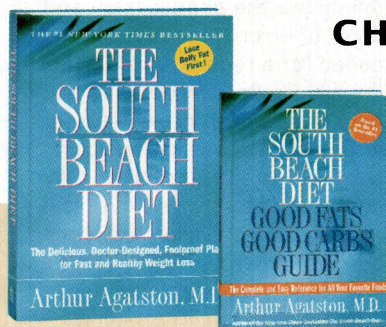
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L I F E

(FISH ID)

WHAT'S THIS?

Home sweet home is certainly sweet for this little fish, which is perfectly adapted to spending its entire life perched right where it is. It takes on the color of its home, and its tapered body ends in a tail that mimics the feathery arms of its host. But that's not all: Unique among fishes, this Indo-Pacific species has a jointed neck that allows it to move its head up, down and side to side to stay aligned with the arms of its host. And the fish's pelvic fins are modified into suction cups that help it stay put. This little guy's common name makes perfect sense once you know the name of the host it keeps such a firm grip on.

t h e A N S W E RCRINOID CLINGFISH, *Discotrema crinophila*.

the DIFFERENCE

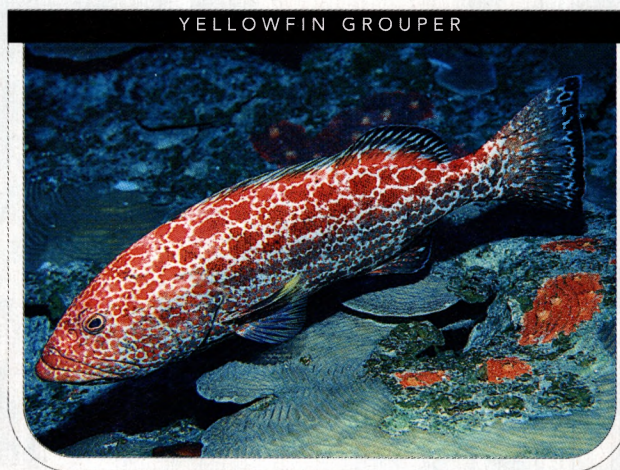
Sometimes the difference between two fish is not the difference between two species.

Take a close look at the two fish pictured here before reading further. Even without having to reach for reading glasses, it's obvious that the distinctive difference between the two fish is their color.

When new divers first attempt to put names with fish, faces, size and color reign

supreme as the characteristics most commonly used to sort among the myriad animals of the reef. Size is a bit of a tease to our senses because everything appears one-third larger under water. However, attempting to distinguish a fish species by color alone presents even more of a challenge for fish-watchers.

This point is well illustrated by the yellowfin grouper, *Mycteroperca venenosa*, a Caribbean member of the sea bass family. Many reef fishes,



including sea basses, flounders, wrasses, frogfishes and a mixed-bag of species from other families, can change their colors and markings quickly

and dramatically, a factor that can confuse the identification process.

All too often, it is a much more subtle marking such as

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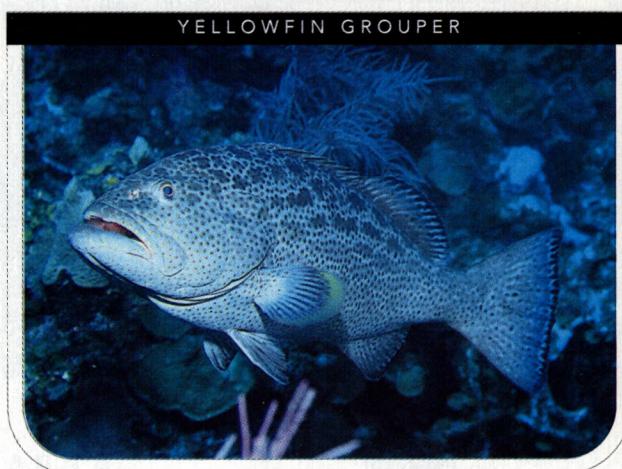
CE

the pale yellow margin on the pectoral fins of the yellowfin grouper (you might need those glasses now) that turns out to be the most reliable key to identifying correctly a species in the field. There's a reason we call this grouper the yellowfin: The telltale yellow fin tips are always present, no matter which color or marking pattern the species happens to display.

Most chameleon-like fishes have the ability to change their typical color and markings within seconds and lighten and darken at will. Generally the brightest, most conspicuous patterns are used to communicate reproductive readiness or aggression, whereas dull, broken markings provide a protective cloak of camouflage.

When stimulated by

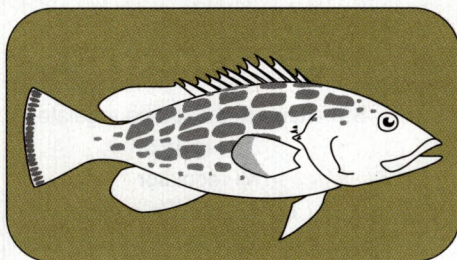
nerves, or in some cases hormones, pigments in irregularly shaped skin cells known as chromatophores either concen-



YELLOWFIN GROUPER

trate in the core, causing the fish to become paler, or expand through radiating branches, intensifying colors. Chromatophores containing

different pigments overlay one another to produce an even larger palette of colors. — PAUL HUMANN AND NED DELOACH



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DRIVE & DIVE

Octopus's Garden

Puget Sound is one of the best places on earth to search for the giant Pacific octopus.

Between Seattle and the vast Pacific, Puget Sound offers calm water for divers and giant cephalopods.

BY HENRY C. POWERS

PROTECTED from the harsh winds, waves and surge that plague much of the West Coast of the United States, the inland waterways of Washington's Puget Sound are an ideal habitat for cold-water marine life. Here, whale-watchers and worm hunters alike find an abundance of life that makes it well worth the extra

effort it takes to dive these chilly waters.

The most sought-after marine life encounter in these waters is with the giant Pacific octopus, *Octopus dofleini*, whose eight massive arms can grow to 20 feet in length. Encounters are infrequent, not because there's a lack of octopuses, but because the big creatures can be hard to find. Their advanced camouflage techniques—primarily their ability to wrinkle their skin, creating different textures and pigments—allow giant Pacific octopuses to

hide right in front of a diver's face. Divers often swim by without seeing them, even when they're looking right at one. Fortunately, once you know what to look for, you'll find octopuses popping up all over Puget Sound. Here are seven prime sites to start your octopus hunting.

Sunrise Beach

JUST NORTH of Tacoma, Sunrise Beach has a sandy bottom and rock reef that provides ideal habitat for octopuses. The deep cracks



HOW TO FIND A GIANT PACIFIC OCTOPUS

WHEN THEY'RE NOT OUT HUNTING for their next meal, giant Pacific octopuses spend most of their time hidden from predators inside their dens—which can be almost anything that affords them protection. The best way to find an octopus is to find its den.

Because octopuses are messy eaters, look for discarded crustacean shells. Often, just outside the front entrance of a den you'll find a pile of empty crab and scallop shells. Another telltale sign of a den is dirt or sand churned up by an octopus that has been expanding or cleaning out its home.

Look for an unusual number of bottom fish hanging around a few rocks. Octopuses often make their dens under rocks, and bottom fish tend to hang around looking for a free meal from the octopus's scraps or the shrimp that come to feed on the scraps. When you find a den and no octopus is inside it, scan the area—the resident octopus might be only a few feet away, watching you.

Octopuses have the ability to camouflage themselves by changing the appearance of their skin, but they can't change the appearance of their suckers, which are round, white and numerous. Find the suckers and you'll find the octopus. A dive light will make the white disks stand out against the terrain, even during the day.

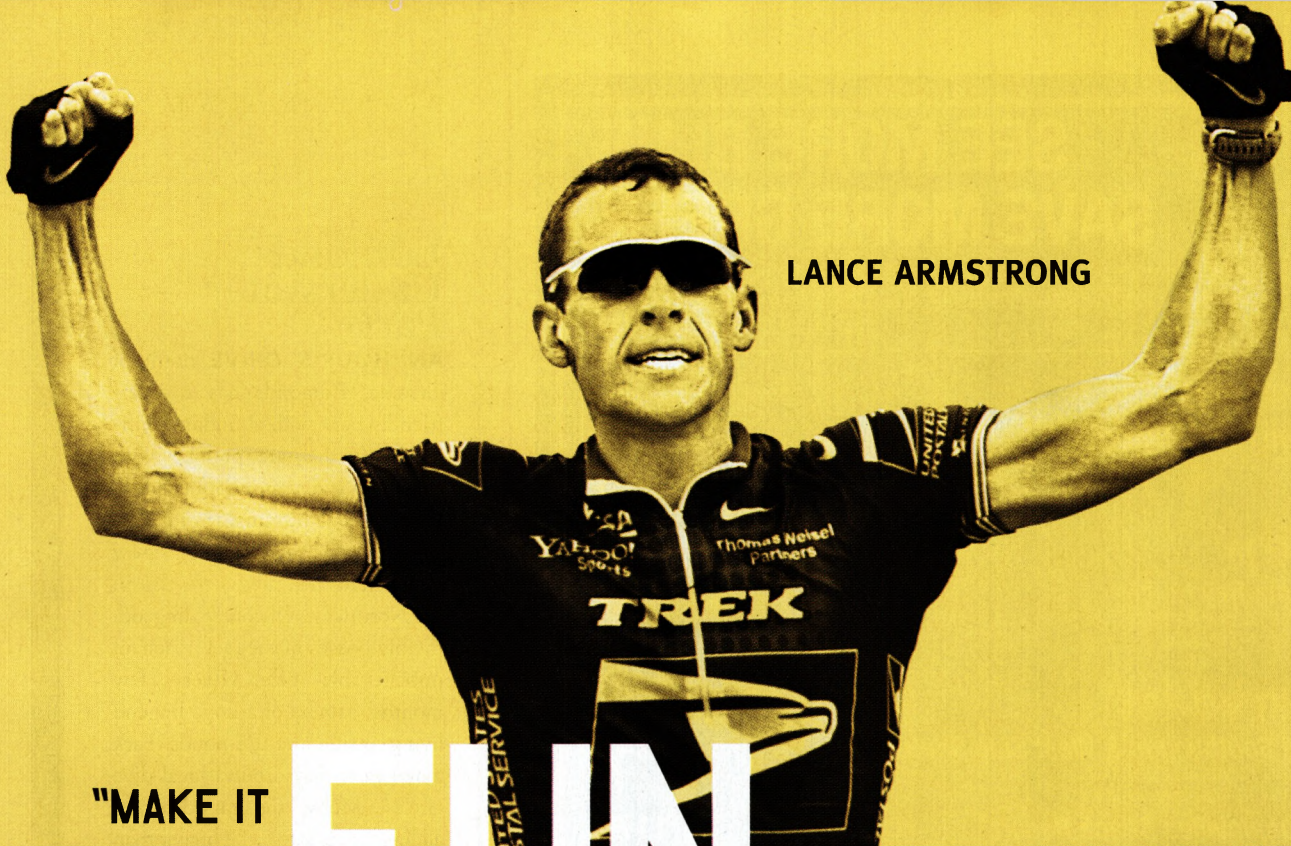
If octopuses are out and about, they will often slip away before you notice them. If you think octopuses are in the area, swim as slowly and quietly as possible and watch for movement.

and crevices of its sheer face afford octopuses and wolf eels alike a place to rest safely between rounds of their never-ending shellfish hunt. Wolf eels are almost as fascinating as octopuses. The closest thing to a puppy dog you may ever find under

water, wolf eels at some sites in the Northwest are so accustomed to people that they happily greet divers when they enter the water, wagging their tails in anticipation of a crab handout.

The reef at Sunrise Beach is accessible from shore, but local charter boats provide more comfort and easier diving, plus they'll give you a sandwich and cookies for lunch. Several dive charters operate from the dock at Point Defiance Park, which also has a nice zoo.





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DRIVE & DIVE

Edmonds Underwater Park

AN HOUR'S DRIVE north of Tacoma, Edmonds has a diver-friendly park with abundant artificial reefs that are popular with octopuses and many enormous fish. As there is no hunting or gathering allowed, rockfish and cabezon grow larger here than anywhere else in the Northwest. Of course, lingcod, the big bosses of the reef, reach an unbelievable size. Every few months, rumors of a huge lingcod living inside the Edmonds Park make their way around local dive circles. "Moby," the granddaddy of all lingcod, is said to be bigger than most men. But these are just rumors. Right?

The park was established in 1970, but this area was popular among divers long before that. In 1935, a massive 300-foot-long dry dock was scuttled adjacent to the nearby state ferry terminal to serve as a breakwater. By the time recreational diving first appeared in Puget Sound, the dry dock was a thriving reef, making Edmonds a gathering place for area divers. Over the years, volunteers have improved the park by sinking smaller boats and other reef materials such as environmentally friendly concrete blocks and pipes. Today the park is bigger, better and more popular than ever.

Keystone Jetty

ASK ANY WASHINGTON diver where you can find big octopuses, and he'll most likely tell you to dive the Keystone Jetty. A 20-minute ferry ride from the mainland takes you to Whidbey Island in central Puget Sound. Adjacent to Fort Casey State Park, Keystone Jetty

features a diverse array of Northwest marine life including many species of crabs, sea stars and nudibranchs, in addition to guaranteed octopus sightings.

The massive rocks that form the jetty are ideal hiding places for the octopuses. They often burrow beneath the rocks into the sand and gravel bottom to make dens. Divers with a keen eye will notice the telltale signs of an octopus den—discarded crab and scallop shells piled outside a small opening is sometimes the only indicator of a lair's location.

Listed as a marine protected area in 2003, the Keystone Jetty is off-limits to marine life harvesting, and the local marine life seems to know this. Lingcod, which are popular among anglers and hunters, are in abundance here during the six weeks of their annual open season in February and March. Despite the lingcod's ability to eat octopuses—they will occasionally bite off an arm—there is never a shortage of octopuses here.

Turn Rock

A FERRY FROM Anacortes on Fidalgo Island takes you to five of the biggest of the San Juan Islands (including San Juan Island itself) in the northwesternmost corner of the United States—just a short hop from Victoria, British Columbia. East of San Juan Island's Friday Harbor, a channel navigation marker and a kelp bed adorn the top of Turn Rock.

Divers can easily circle the base of this seamount in 60 to 70 feet of water at least once during a dive. Octopuses commonly hide by wedging themselves into gaps between the huge rocks that make up Turn Rock. As you make your way into the shallows, keep an eye out for camouflaged cabezon hiding quietly in the leafy brown kelp on the rocks.



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DRIVE & DIVE

Steller's sea lions are frequently spotted at Turn Rock and will approach divers closely. Although large, these agile creatures appear to fly through the water.

James Island

ON THE EAST SIDE of the San Juan Islands, James Island is only three miles from Fidalgo Island and the mainland. On the northwest side of James Island, a drift dive can be made by starting next to the steep wall and drifting south with the current. As you make your way south, the wall becomes more gradual with many large slabs of rock decorated with huge clouds of white plumose anemones.

Big lingcod are common at James Island, but because this is a frequent fishing spot, they are not as docile as lingcod in protected waters. Octopuses like this area because it's only a short jaunt south for them to a nearby shallow cove where they can hunt for crabs and other sandy-bottom shellfish.

Octopus Hole

ONE DIVE EVERY octopus junkie should make is at a small rock reef on the west side of Hood Canal called Octopus Hole. Just north of Hoodsport, this site features a rock wall that runs parallel to shore in 30 to 60 feet of water. The wall is riddled with cracks and crevices where octopuses and wolf eels set up base camp. The wall is just a few feet away from the sandy bottom and one of the octopuses' favorite meals, Dungeness crabs.

Octopuses can occasionally be spotted sunning themselves in the shallow water next to shore. Here against the sand and gravel bottom, they can't hide and often they won't run when approached. They seem hypnotized by the warm rays of the sun—or maybe they're just too lazy to care.



Sund Rock

LESS THAN A MILE to the south of Octopus Hole, Sund Rock offers two distinct areas to dive from shore: Sund Rock itself and a small rock cluster to the north of it called Sund Rock North. Divers access this site by parking next to Highway 101 and hiking down a short trail to the water. Access to both sites is easier by obtaining a dive permit at the adjacent dive shop and parking in a gravel lot between the two sites.

At Sund Rock, the rock wall above the surface extends below the water to a depth of 70 to 80 feet where it meets a sandy bottom that keeps descending down past recreational limits. Along the wall, you'll find landslides of smaller rocks that provide perfect cover for octopuses and wolf eels. It is common to see at least five adult wolf eels and several resident octopuses at this site.

Sund Rock North Wall is smaller than the wall at Sund Rock, but is still worth a dive. A hundred yards or so north, the North Wall sits apart from Sund Rock, and is separated by a long sandy slope. On the wall between 40 and 90 feet, vermillion, China and yellow-eye rockfish can be spotted milling about. There are several big cracks in the rock face here that make ideal octopus dens. **SD**

GET THERE > For more information on these dive sites, go to www.scubadiving.com/indepth/washington.



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ADVANCED DIVING

Is Deep-Air Diving Safe?

With all the hype over mixed gas, sometimes we forget the virtues of good old-fashioned air. **BY MICHAEL ANGE**

THE POPULARITY OF OXYGEN-ENRICHED AIR in recreational diving and the growing use of alternative breathing gases among technical divers has had a curious backlash—the notion that old-fashioned air is somehow bad for deep dives.

Of course, the simple fact is that people have been safely diving air to depths greater than 130 feet since the sport began, and to this day, European recreational

divers routinely dive air to 165 feet. Decades of experience show us that air, like other gases, is relatively safe when properly used.

Weighing the Alternatives

LET'S BE CLEAR: Alternative breath-

ing gases have their uses. The higher oxygen content of nitrox makes it advantageous at depths between 60 and 130 feet, but restricts its use on deeper dives where oxygen toxicity can become a serious risk. For example, to avoid the dangerous effects of high-pressure oxygen, the common recre-

ational nitrox blend of 36 percent oxygen should not be used below 110 feet. For deep divers, nitrox is best used as a deco gas during shallow safety stops and decompression stops.

Originally developed for dives well beyond traditional sport diving limits, trimix blends (typically consisting of helium, nitrogen and oxygen) are now recommended by some training agencies for dives as shallow as 100 feet. Customized to each dive, trimix limits the narcotic effect of nitrogen. It also allows us to lower the oxygen percentage for dives below 190 feet to prevent oxygen toxicity.

Naturally, these benefits come with a cost. Helium is a relatively expensive gas (tank fills range from \$30 to \$100 per tank), and it can be very hard to find in some places. It also requires deeper decompression stops due to its unique gas-loading characteristics. Most importantly for the diver, it requires the use of at least two or three gas mixtures for every dive—trimix at depth, a travel gas for descents and ascents, and a deco gas for stops. The additional tanks significantly increase the weight of gear, and the complexity of the setup can lead to fatal gas-switching errors.

By contrast, deep-air diving is the definition of simplicity. Divers can choose to use one gas from surface to surface, including decompression stops. Dive tables and computer algorithms for air have been tried and proven in decades of use, and air is available at nearly any location around the world. Finally, deep-air diving does not require specialized equipment, such as oxygen-clean tanks and regulators. However, like any form of advanced diving, deep air also requires special training, planning and considerations.

Avoiding Narcosis

THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE to safe deep-air diving is nitrogen narcosis. It is

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a well-established fact that narcosis affects virtually all divers at depths as shallow as 100 feet. The real question is at what level the impairment becomes unsafe or unmanageable for the individual diver. The answer varies from diver to diver, and can change from dive to dive.

Instructors conducting deep-air training in relatively warm, clear water routinely take students to 180 feet or deeper without serious impairment. The same divers in colder water or water with less visibility are likely to find narcosis impairment much more severe. And dives that involve complicated tasks, such as navigating a wreck, or that include longer linear swims usually involve more impairment than a simple bounce dive. Only through training and experience is it possible to evaluate accurately your personal susceptibility to narcosis impairment.

The Rule of Thirds

ANOTHER STEP in safe deep-air diving is air management using the so-called rule of thirds: One-third of the gas is used for descent and movement away from the ascent point, one-third is used for return to the ascent point, and one-third is kept in reserve for emergencies and ascent. Many divers mistake this rule as leaving one-third for gas sharing. Statistics show that a diver is much more likely to use his one-third reserve supply for dealing with his own delays or problems.

Deep dives need to be meticulously planned, and a part of this planning process is identifying your gas consumption rate and planning the dive to be well within the confines of the available air in your cylinders. In order to estimate air usage, a diver must also plan for his decompression schedule and several contingency profiles.

Typically, divers will take a projected dive plan, 140 feet for 15 minutes for example, and then add two stop depths

plus five to 10 minutes of contingency bottom time. In our example, a conservative diver would carry enough air to complete a maximum depth of 160 feet for 25 minutes on two-thirds of the available supply. Remember that bottom time ends when direct ascent to the surface begins, so a 25-minute profile might

actually require an hour or more under water by the time ascent and decompression is completed.

Planning for Deco Stops

ANY COMPREHENSIVE deep-air training program will include a detailed

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understanding of decompression stops. A decompression stop is when a diver ascends to a particular depth, usually between 10 and 40 feet, and remains at that depth for a certain number of minutes before moving to the next stop or surfacing.

Divers planning staged decompression must carry a totally redundant gas

supply. Some training agencies allow equipment configurations that consist of dual regulators on either a single high-capacity tank (95 cubic feet or larger with an H- or Y-style valve) or twin cylinders that are manifolded together. However, deep divers are well advised to carry a small redundant cylinder of gas,

called a stage or pony bottle, containing at least 30 cubic feet of air or a nitrox mix suitable for breathing during ascent and decompression stops. The size of the pony cylinder is based on the diver's gas consumption rate in order to provide enough gas to complete the entire ascent, including any stage stops with approximately 30 percent reserve. This gives the diver an extremely safe supply in the event of the loss of the entire primary air supply.

Is It Safe?

WHEN IT COMES TO deep-air diving, the big question for most divers is: Is it safe? Safe is a relative term. Deep-air diving, like any other activity, is as safe or as dangerous as the diver chooses to make it.

Divers interested in deep air should start by mastering all basic scuba skills, especially buoyancy control, swimming efficiency and emergency skills like gas sharing. The next step is to ensure that all of your equipment is properly serviced, adequate for the diving activities to be conducted and performing flawlessly. With proper training, divers can begin to build their skills and expand their limits through experience.

It is instructive to note that in the past decade there have been considerably more technical diving fatalities due to mistaken gas switches and other diver errors on mixed-gas dives than fatalities linked to the use of air in the 130- to 180-foot range. This statistic is even more telling when we consider that most of the diver errors in mixed-gas fatalities involved divers and/or instructors with significant deep diving experience. There is no doubt that shallower dives are generally safer than deeper dives and no-deco dives are safer than staged deco dives. There is also no doubt that thousands of deep-air dives are completed safely every year. These are the facts. The safety decisions are now yours. **SD**

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These divers know the secret: By doing less, they'll have more fun.



Less Is More

Six ways to dive as easily as your favorite divemaster or instructor.

BY JOHN FRANCIS

NOTHING MAKES me feel as clumsy as an experienced dive guide. He steps to the entry door as if his tank were weight-

less and his equipment were growing on him. He seems to glide through the water without finning and breathe without making bubbles. Sea life flocks to his side and performs at his command. At the end of the dive, he levitates from the water and onto the boat without apparent effort. He shucks his gear, combs his hair and passes round the plate of papaya while I'm still gasping and staggering to my gear station.

How do the pros do it? Their secret

trick, I learned after interviewing a lot of them, is simple: They do less. They swim less, breathe less, work less. They carry less gear and less lead. They waste less energy and lose less heat, both in the water and out. And, in an odd way, they even think less, which is why, according to Claudia Pellarini, the photo pro at Stuart Cove's Dive Bahamas on New Providence Island, the sea life seems to come to the dive guides.

"The actual diving part we're not thinking about," she says. "In the back of your mind, you do it on instinct. The camera in your hand is on instinct. We're not worried about our gear, we're quiet with our breathing, our buoyancy is really good, we are relaxed. I think everything around you senses that. And if you kind of get into an area, everything will come to you."

Maybe that sounds esoteric, but the less-is-more concept works on a prosaic level, too, like improving your buoyancy control—the one skill every instructor, divemaster and guide seems to think needs improving. Too many of us, they say, are hitting the reef, popping to the surface and yo-yoing between the two while worrying over the inflate and deflate buttons. Because of our poor buoyancy control we're wasting air, getting stressed and missing the scenery. And how can we gain the effortless, pinpoint buoyancy control of the dive gods? Two words, they say: less lead.

Less Lead, More Control

IF YOU'RE LIKE most divers, you carry too much lead, which means too much air in your BC, which constantly throws your buoyancy balance off. You get more positive as you ascend, more negative as you descend, and the bigger the bubble in your BC, the wilder the swings. So how do you get down to the smallest amount of weight? Here the pros have some specific tips.

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"Go in a swimming pool first with all the gear for diving in the ocean," says Simone Wackenhud, a course director for six years at Toucan Diving in Bonaire. Those perfect, controlled conditions, with no waves or current and with extra weights at poolside, make it easy to play around with your weight load until you get it right. Start with enough lead to sink to the bottom.

First, get all the air out of your BC. Most BCs trap a little air behind your back, and the way to get it out is to rock backward and stretch the corrugated hose all the way upward until the bubble is in and under the hose, then hit the deflate button. Next, you have to be absolutely motionless. Try the "Buddha position," crossing your legs and grabbing your ankles.

is clean. A better idea might be to take the neutral buoyancy course that is offered at almost every dive destination, or just ask the staff for help. Trust me, they'll be eager to give it, because getting their customers neutral saves them headaches. At the very least, make a buoyancy-check dive off the dock or beach on the evening of your arrival, even if it means missing the welcome cocktail.

Less Gear, More Comfort

ONE REASON DIVE GUIDES

don't struggle with their gear as much is that they don't wear as much of it. I once saw a divemaster with no BC and no weight belt, just a tank on a plastic backpack with a single weight strapped to it. That might take minimalism too far, but

Every piece of extra equipment dangling from your BC causes drag, which tires you, wastes air and increases your stress. "Fancy things distract you from the important," says Claudia Pellarini.

Now reduce your weight load bit by bit until inhaling makes you rise and exhaling makes you sink. At this point, the dive staff can easily make the pool water to salt water conversion or you can do it yourself: Add your body weight, the weight of your dive gear (usually about 50 pounds) and your weight belt loaded for fresh water. Divide the total by 40 and add that amount to your belt for salt water. (Example: You weigh 170 pounds and you wear five pounds of lead in the pool. $170 + 50 + 5 = 225$. $225 / 40 = 5.6$. Add five or six pounds.) It won't be exact, but it will be close.

Of course, the resort won't want to see you in its pool unless your gear

it's generally the customers, not the pros, who are diving in clear tropical water with double-bladder BCs and back-up reels, with multiple lights, horns, rescue mirrors and the rest of the accessory catalog dangling from their 16 D-rings.

Every piece of extra equipment that you wear causes drag, which tires you, wastes air and increases your stress. Here's Pellarini again: "Fancy things distract from the important and make you nervous because you have to deal with stuff that's just not necessary."

Naturally, a wreck penetration at 200 feet is a different story from a reef tour at 80 feet, but the point is to tailor your equipment to the situ-

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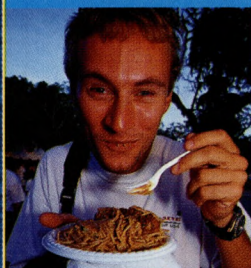
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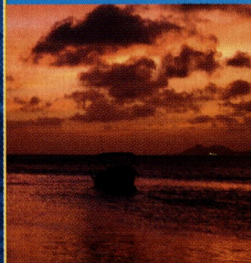
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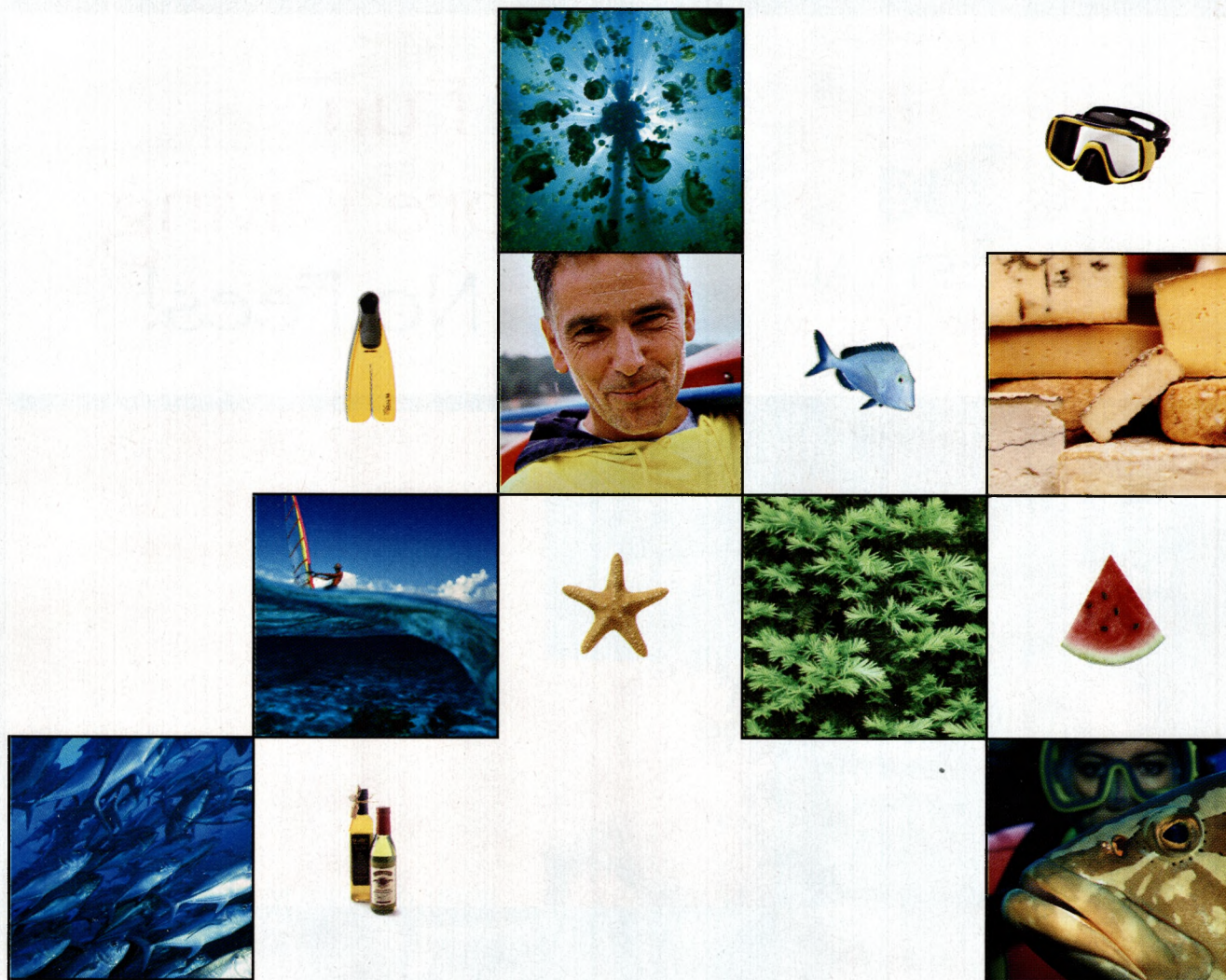


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ation. Generally, less of it means more focus on what's really happening around you, and more fun.

One thing dive guides don't think you should minimize, though, is gear maintenance. "Ours may look a little shabby," admits Gary Howe, a PADI course director at the Florida Keys Dive Center in Tavernier. "But do we take care of it? Uh-huh. Because that's how we stay alive under water."

If it's been more than a year since your gear was in for service—even if you haven't been diving a lot—take it in for a checkup before you leave on vacation. And test crucial gear like BCs and regulators before packing them. "Get it serviced, then check it out in a pool," says Wackenhud. "Often, regs and BCs end up in our shop because the service was not done properly."

Less Wanderlust, More Critters

AND HOW—besides that Zen thing Pellarini talks about—do those dive pros manage to find so much more sea life than the rest of us? Part of it is obvious: Many creatures are territorial, always hanging around the same coral head. If you dived the same site 20 times in a month, you too would get a pretty good idea which barrel sponge hides the cleaner shrimp.

But they have another secret trick: Pros see more by moving around less. Too often, dive guides say, their customers hit the water and immediately swim off down the reef at a high rate of speed, as if the goal were to accumulate underwater mileage. It's probably the natural impulse to explore, to see what's around the next corner. The trouble is, the sound of your bubbles and your fins precedes you and triggers the flight response in everything you're hoping to see. Whether they run or hide or freeze into invisibility, most of the animals will have disappeared long before you get

anywhere near them.

Instead, stop and let the stampede go on ahead. Settle quietly on a sand patch or hover next to a rock, and make as little sound and movement as possible. Fish seem to have short memories, and pretty soon a grouper will appear from behind a coral head, an octopus will slither over a rock. "Even if it's seemingly a desert in front of you, eventually all these little creatures that are seeing you and hiding away will get used to you," says Leon Jouberc, a Stuart Cove's dive instructor. "Then they come out."

And look for the littlest life forms, which often behave the weirdest once they emerge and go back to work. "You can stay under the boat for the entire dive," says Howe. "You can search in a pile of sand and find more stuff than if you swim for a mile."

Study Less, Learn More

OF COURSE, ANOTHER REASON dive guides seem to see more is that they are able to identify and name more of what they do see. When you can't put a



Still got air in your tank? Use a little to impress your dive buddy.

SMOKIN! HOW TO BLOW BUBBLE RINGS

WE'VE ALL SEEN DIVE GUIDES lying on their backs at the safety stop puffing out doughnuts of air that expand into perfectly circular hula hoops of air rising to the surface.

It's a showy trick that, like all stagecraft, depends on practice, practice, practice. Christian Lassen, a dive guide at Toucan Diving in Bonaire, suggests a shallow sandy bottom where you can relax on your back and work on it. His method: Purse your lips and say "boo."

Gary Howe, a 30-year instructor from Tavernier, Fla., sticks his tongue tip out and forms his lips around it. "Then you pull your tongue back in and blow at the same time." But Leon Jouberc, a Stuart Cove dive pro, thinks the tongue has nothing to do with it. "You have to force the water out of a perfectly round mouth, in puffs, short puffs."

Whatever the method, there's always a price for success as well as failure. "You make a good ring and then you smile and what happens?" says Howe. "Your mask floods."

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INSTRUCTION

name to the unusual fish you've spotted, it doesn't register in your memory and you forget you've seen it, though in fact you have. But trying to memorize the names of each of the hundreds of tropical reef fish seems an impossibly daunting task. Too many of us have skimmed the nearly 400 pages in Paul Humann's *Reef Fish Identification* book for the Caribbean and given up in despair.

Once again, less is more. Next time, pick from the guide just one or two fish that you're likely to see where you are diving. Study only those—their pictures, names and behavior—and look only for them. When you're able to put names to those one or two in the wild, add another one or two on the next dive. Taking an underwater naturalist course at the resort will accomplish much the same thing, because it will focus on just the species native to the area. Before you know it, you'll be pointing out that yellowhead jawfish to the dive guide.

Not into homework? Here's a really simple trick for finding the "good stuff": Follow the photo pro. I'm not sure how he or she will feel about leading a parade, but if there's a sixth sense for finding the striking and picturesque under water, an experienced photographer is a good bet to have it.

Less Effort, More Energy

DIVE GUIDES REALLY must come out of the water with more energy left than the rest of us, judging by how one of them described his working day. While you're flopping into a hammock after lunch, Christian Lassen at Toucan Diving is still working. He's horsing empty tanks off the boat and full ones back on. He's washing the boat, repairing

what broke, filling tanks, helping out in the dive shop and running errands. At some resorts, dive guides also double as bellboys, humping suitcases and gear bags up and down stairs. "People who go on vacation get pretty exhausted after three dives in a row," he says. "But after a month or two of doing it, we don't get as tired."

And why not? Part of it is that Lassen, like most dive guides, is young and physically fit. Another reason is that the human body just learns to cope with what it has to. But more than anything, dive guides know that less energy wasted diving translates to more energy left at the end of the day. They are not only perfectly weighted but perfectly trimmed, so their bodies bore the smallest hole possible in the water. Their gear is streamlined. They kick short, fluid strokes, swimming no faster than necessary. They move their arms and hands slowly. Water is some 800 times more dense than air, and incompressible at that, so the energy cost of any movement is high and increases geometrically with its speed. Experienced pros do everything under water in slow-motion.

Dive guides work at staying warm, too, because most of the energy a diver loses disappears in the form of heat. The water in the tropics feels warm, but if it's below 98.6 degrees, it's sucking heat out of your body. You may not feel cold, but you will feel tired. That's why dive guides almost always wear more neoprene than their guests. And why they peel it off or cover up during the surface interval, which is often the coolest hour of the day for most divers.

"Divers come up between dives and don't take off their wetsuit, their hair is wet and the wind is blowing—that cools you down even

more," says Joubert. "They think keeping their wetsuit on is going to keep them warm, but it doesn't." Ever heard of a swamp cooler? You're it. Peel off, dry off, cover up.

Less Ego, More Cool

SOME OF US NEED TO make clear to everyone that we are the most competent diver on the boat. We've plumbed every ocean, lake and puddle on the planet (yawn) and we make sure everyone else knows it. We can do this dumb dive in our sleep and we don't need no stinkin' dive briefing.

But have you noticed how the most competent divers make the least noise? Truth is, when divemasters hear all that bugling and chest thumping they think, "Uh-oh. Get the rescue float ready." Bragging is a dead giveaway of insecurity.

Another less-is-more lesson here: To look and be more competent, bring less ego to the boat. Experienced divers realize they don't know it all. Every dive, every day really is different. So they listen, they ask questions. Howe has been an instructor for more than 30 years, yet he says, "The most incredible thing is that when you think you've seen everything, you see something new."

So listen to the stinkin' briefing. It may save you from being the guy who surfaces a half mile down-current from the boat.

And that's it! By stripping away extra weight, unnecessary gear and bad attitudes—by fighting yourself and the elements less—you'll conserve your energy and your focus for times when it really counts (like when that manta soars by). You'll be relaxed and you'll have more fun. Just ask your dive guide. **SD**

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Belly Up to the Bar

For fin-kicking energy, pack one of these portable pick-me-ups on your next dive. **BY SELENE YEAGER**

DESPITE ITS reputation as a rather passive pastime, scuba diving is serious exercise. Forty-five minutes of finning and fawning over marine life burns more than 400 calories—more than if you spent the same amount of time on the StairMaster—and that doesn't include the energy you burn lugging equipment and hauling heavy tanks from the beach to the boat.

Yet, unlike cyclists, runners and even run-of-the-mill gym rats, few divers give much thought to fueling their sport, often taking to the sea with nothing more substantial than the flaky pastry and tepid cup of joe served up free from the hotel lobby. A better pre-dive snack: Energy bars—pre-packaged, vitamin-fortified snack bars made with grains, dried fruits and other blood-sugar-boosting ingredients. Though not nutritionally superior to real food like oatmeal and oranges or a sandwich and an apple, energy bars offer several important advantages for divers.

For starters, they're portable. Handily wrapped in bomb-proof foil, energy bars are easy to toss into your dive bag without worrying about crumbs, spills or spoilage, should you forget about them for days, even months, on end.

More importantly, because they're designed for on-the-fly consumption, many

energy bars are as digestible as toast and crackers—a plus for divers who get a little green around the gills when the chop kicks up. “Obviously, it's a good idea to try a couple different brands before your dive trip to see how you like them and how they sit in your stomach,” says sports nutritionist Liz Applegate, Ph.D., author of *Eat Smart, Play Hard*. “But, in general, they're a great idea for divers, who can underestimate how hungry a full morning of diving can make you.”

Choices, Choices

WITH THE SOARING popularity of energy bars has come a dizzying explosion of brands, flavors and bar specialty types.

The best bar choice for diving is your standard energy bar, which delivers a blend of carbohydrates, protein and fat to provide quick, yet lasting energy. “Divers should favor bars that are lower on the Glycemic Index scale,” says Applegate, meaning that the bar you choose shouldn't be so fast-acting that it spikes your blood sugar on the boat and leaves you feeling flagged 15 minutes into your dive. In general, that means finding a bar with a little fiber, which slows digestion, but not so much fiber (more than 5 grams), that it leaves the bar sitting uncomfortably in your stomach. For the best results, always wash down energy bars with plenty of water.



Here's a guide to some of the most popular energy bars. Prices vary, but you can expect to pay in the ballpark of \$1.50 per bar. All bars were tested for taste, ease of digestion and performance during scuba-intensity exercise. **Note:** Due to nutritional variations between flavors, some figures are approximations, based on an average.

Balance

CALORIES > approx. 200 **CARBS** > approx. 22g **PROTEIN** > approx. 15g **FAT** > 6g **FIBER** > approx. 2.5g

More than two dozen varieties dwell in the Balance family, including Balance + with herbs and antioxidants and crispy, chewy Balance Gold Crunch. Macronutrient composition is based on the 40-30-30 (carbs-protein-fat) “Zone” philosophy. **For more info:** (800) 454-8624; www.balancebar.com.

Dive tip: Many Balance bars are chocolate-coated, which is tasty but messy. The best choice for divers is the Balance Outdoor series, which is formulated not to melt in the hot sun. This bar is lower in carbs than the rest, which makes it a little light for extended efforts.

Clif Bar

CALORIES > approx. 240 **CARBS** > approx. 45g **PROTEIN** > approx. 10g **FAT** > approx. 4g **FIBER** > 5g

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MITCH MANDEL



Clif is one of the energy bar originators. You can find them darn near everywhere and you're bound to like one of the 13 flavors. Some, like Peanut Toffee Buzz, even come with a shot of caffeine for an extra kick. Clif Bars are 70 percent certified organic and are fortified with 23 vitamins and minerals. **For more info:** (800) CLIF-BAR; www.clifbar.com.

Dive Tip: With 5 grams of fiber, these are the densest bars in the batch. Some testers feel the bar sits a little heavy immediately after eating. Give yourself digestion time.

Gatorade

CALORIES > 250 CARBS > 38g PROTEIN > 15g FAT > 5g FIBER > 2g

From the originators of the sports drink comes this crispy energy snack. Gatorade bars are fortified with 11 vitamins and minerals. **For more info:** (800) 88-GATOR; www.gatorade.com.

Dive Tip: Super easy to digest. Satisfying like a healthy Rice Krispy treat. The texture is particularly good when the bar is warm.

Honey Stinger

CALORIES > approx. 190 CARBS > approx. 28g PROTEIN > 10g FAT > approx. 3.5g Fiber approx. 2g

As the name implies, Honey Stinger bars contain more than 30 percent honey. Honey



is believed by some to enhance immunity, and studies show it works well as a natural energy booster. Fortified with 23 vitamins and minerals. **For more info:** (866) GO-HONEY; www.honeystinger.com.

Dive Tip: It's quick to digest and delivers instant, yet lasting energy. Limited distribution can make it tricky to find.

Luna Bar

CALORIES > approx. 175 CARBS > approx. 26g PROTEIN > 10g FAT > approx. 4g FIBER > approx. 2g

Luna is Clif's little sister. Specially formulated for women, it's made with soy protein and delivers more than a third of women's daily calcium requirements. Fortified with 23 vitamins and minerals. **For more info:** (800) LUNABAR; www.lunabar.com.

Dive Tip: It's easier to digest than the original Clif Bars. Though formulated for women, men love these bars, too. Some are frosted with a light icing that's yummy, but can melt in a hot dive bag.

Mojo Bar

CALORIES > approx. 195 CARBS > approx. 23g PROTEIN > approx. 9g FAT > approx. 8g FIBER > approx. 3g

The slightly salty brother of Clif. Like a molded bar of GORP, Mojo is packed full of heart-healthy nuts. **For more info:** (800)



884-5254; www.mojobar.com.

Dive Tip: With its salt-dusted nutty flavor, Mojo is a pleasant departure from the typically sweet snacks in the energy bar category. Particularly satisfying on hot, sweaty dive days.

Peak Energy Bar

CALORIES > approx. 285 CARBS > approx. 57g PROTEIN > approx. 5g FAT > approx. 4g FIBER > approx. 3g

Made with natural ingredients like oats, raisins and honey, Peak prides itself on its homemade taste. Peak is also fortified with 24 vitamins and minerals. **For more info:** (719) 578-5000; www.peakbar.com.

Dive Tip: Here's a mother lode of carbs and calories to fuel your next long surface swim. Baked with unrefined ingredients, Peak is a flavor fave among testers, but it can be difficult to find.

PowerBar Performance

CALORIES > approx. 235 CARBS > 45g PROTEIN > approx. 10g FAT > approx. 2.5g FIBER > approx. 2.5g

The bar that started it all in 1986, PowerBar now comes in 12 flavors. Provides 100 percent of energy-boosting B-vitamins and protective antioxidants. **For more info:** (800) 58-POWER; www.powerbar.com.

Dive Tip: The original PowerBar is an

ultra-fast-digesting, space-agey bar that doesn't even remotely resemble real food. PowerBar's Harvest line contains more fiber (3-4 grams) and eats like a cross between a brownie and a cereal bar. The company also recently released PowerBar Bites: a baggie of "energy GORP" that includes crispy energy bar chunks along with oats and nuts.

Pria

CALORIES > 110 CARBS > 16g PROTEIN > 5g FAT > 3g FIBER > n/a

Pria is PowerBar's more feminine side, made with soy protein and delivering 30 percent of the daily requirements for bone-building calcium. This lower-calorie bar is fortified with 23 vitamins and minerals. **For more info:** (800) 58-POWER; www.powerbar.com.

Dive Tip: The light, quick-digesting

Pria provides a nice boost before some mellow finning, but don't count on it to carry you through a more rigorous dive.

Snickers Marathon

CALORIES > 220 CARBS > approx. 30g PROTEIN > approx. 11g FAT > approx. 7g FIBER > approx. 2g

For years, active people argued that energy bars were so much like candy, you may as well eat a Snickers. Not to be caught asleep at the wheel, the country's most popular candy bar responded with an energy bar all its own. It's less sweet than the original and is fortified with 16 vitamins and minerals. **For more info:** (800) 551-9986; www.snickersmarathon.com.

Dive Tip: Testers loved the taste. The Marathon also falls low on the GI scale, meaning it delivers some of the most lasting energy of the bunch. **SD**



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WHY YOU HAVE TO PEE

Q: No matter how many times I urinate prior to a dive, I always end a dive desperately having to go to the bathroom. I purposely don't drink before a dive, except two cups of morning coffee. I don't have a weak bladder or any form of incontinence. How can I control this?

A: The phenomenon you describe is known as immersion diuresis, and it occurs whenever the body is submerged in water. Immersion causes blood that is normally located in the leg veins to be sent to the large internal blood vessels and central organs such as the heart. In cold water the blood vessels in the extremities actually narrow. This is called vasoconstriction. This vasoconstriction occurs primarily in the skin and superficial tissues of the body, which increases the volume of blood sent to the heart.

The increased blood volume in the major vessels is interpreted by your body as a fluid overload. This in

turn forces the kidneys to produce urine to lower the central blood volume—the body's automatic response to preserve a balanced blood volume.

Once you exit the water, circulating blood volume returns to near normal—less the fluid taken to produce urine, which is quickly replaced as the body draws fluid from body tissues, such as muscles. Unfortunately, you probably will also leave the water with a full bladder.

Since we are all subject to the same phenomenon under water, this is probably your normal response to immersion. Caffeine and alcohol are diuretics, and can increase urine flow further. Avoiding alcohol and caffeine before a dive will help reduce the problem. There is no way to avoid immersion diuresis. So, what to do? (a) suffer; (b) get a dry suit and wear a diaper; or (c) conquer squeamishness and urinate in your wetsuit—while you're still in the water.

DAN Dive Safety and Medical Information Line, (919) 684-2948; **DAN 24-Hour Diving Emergency Hotline**, (919) 684-4DAN (collect); or (919) 684-8111; **web:** www.DiversAlertNetwork.org.

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Before embarking on your next tropical dive adventure, check out this collection of hit-the-road dive gear designed specifically for the traveling diver.



ZEAGLE TRAVEL SYSTEMS. When you're packing ultralight, it's tough to beat Zeagle's line of travel systems. The company has managed to squeeze an entire scuba outfit, starting with your choice of either the Scout, Escape or Zena back-buoyancy BC, plus an Envoy regulator with octopus, a Navigator console with pressure gauge, depth gauge and compass, a mask, a snorkel, and a pair of Teleoz fins, into a rugged travel bag measuring 14" x 23" x 6". And get this: It only weighs about 15 pounds. The bag has both a suitcase-style handle and backpack straps, plus a zippered inside pouch for stowing small items and a large outside pouch. It's an easy, all-in-one system, although we'd trade the Teleoz fins for a pair of Sporasub Variant Comps (see page 60), which fit perfectly into the pack when disassembled. **\$1,149** for the Scout system, **\$1,269** for the Escape system and **\$1,299** for the Zena system.

MARES HUB CENTURY. Everything is connected in the HUB (Human Underwater Breathing) system. It's an integrated high-lift BC with a built-in mechanical release weight system, an Airtrim pneumatic inflation/deflation system and a specially designed balanced diaphragm first stage. Supply hoses are routed through the BC's innards for a streamlined profile and dedicated compartments hold the Proton second stage as well as the optional octopus and gauge console. The entire system weighs about 12 pounds and comes with a fold-down carry handle that stows in the hard, molded backpad. **\$1,299.**





1 XS SCUBA METRO GLOVE. Yeah, we know some exotic dive locales frown on gloves, but we frown on finger cuts. When you gotta have protection, these featherweight gloves have a lightly textured palm to protect against scrapes. **\$14.95.** **2 PRINCETON TEC TRAVEL PACK.** One box with two lights—the Miniwave II for night diving in clear water and the Tec 40 for poking around in crevices during the day. Included are a coiled lanyard and a retractor for attaching the lights to your BC. **\$84.99.** **3 MARES MORPHOS PRO.** New for 2004, the lightweight Morphos Pro zips up into a neat cocoon-shaped package that takes up about half the space in your dive bag as a conventional jacket-style BC. It comes fitted with Mares' popular Airtrim pneumatic inflate/deflate system. Traveling divers will like the integrated weight pouches and armchair buoyancy. **\$599.** **4 SEAQUEST PASSPORT.** Born for wandering the world, this new jacket-style BC stows compactly into an integrated mesh bag that folds into the lower backpad when not in use. The weight pockets hold 20 pounds of lead and the BC provides 16 to 44 pounds of lift (depending on size). You want more? OK, the BC can actually be rinsed and dried while stowed in its mesh bag. Sweet. Available in six sizes. **\$349.**

THE CARRY-ON

1 STAHLSCALYPSO CARRY-ON BAG. This large but legal-sized carry-on bag features two roomy main compartments fitted with zippered sleeves and pouches for small items. **\$119.95.** **2 AQUA LUNG MICRA ADJ.** The Micra ADJ is just about the smallest and lightest second stage around. Coupled to the Titan first stage, it only weighs about two-and-a-half pounds, but it's an easy breather and extremely comfortable. **\$469.** **3 ATOMIC AQUATICS SS1 TI.** This inflator/reg breathes better than many primary-use regulators and only weighs about six ounces. Better still, it detaches from your BC's corrugated hose so you can pack it with your regulator and gauges. **\$349 (\$229 for stainless steel).** **4 SUBMERSIBLE SYSTEMS SPARE AIR 170.** Super compact, this 1.7 cubic-foot bailout bottle weighs only one-and-a-half pounds full and stows just about anywhere. **\$299.** We recommend the optional Travel Pack (\$10), which includes O-rings, protective caps and instructions on flying with a Spare Air. **5 STAHLSCALYPSO BAHAMA BRICKS.** These handy mesh containers keep things organized inside your bag. **\$7.95 to \$13.95.** **6 DAN POCKET GUARDIAN FIRST-AID KIT.** Everything you need to play doctor in a compact, airtight pack. **\$20.**



THE SETUP



1 DEEPOUTDOORS NEUTRINO. A minimalist, weight-integrated back-buoyancy BC designed for traveling, the Neutrino uses a trapezoidal strap system for a very snug fit. The single rear bladder sewn directly onto the harness is wide at the bottom, but tapered at the top for a streamlined profile. The weight pockets use a mechanical security system backed up by Velcro, but you can remove them and simplify the system even more. \$575. **2 ATOMIC AQUATICS T1X.** The T1x is one of the most comfortable and easy-breathing regulators ever tested by ScubaLab. Full titanium first and second stages result in a super lightweight package (1.75 pounds)—plus it comes with its own padded regulator bag (not shown). \$1,596. **3 HENDERSON INSTA-DRY 3MM CORE WARMER.** A unique approach to wetsuit manufacturing allows both the inside and outside of this suit to dry within minutes. \$179. Also due out in 2004 are 3mm, 5mm and 7mm jumpsuits. **4 SPORASUB VARIANT COMP.** Powerful in the water, compact in your dive bag. Foot pockets separate from fin blades to create a travel package only 23 inches long, but when assembled they provide a full 36 inches of finning fun. \$159. **5 TEKTITE TREK 6000** A removable pistol grip makes it easy to pack, and its xenon bulb and jeweled reflector make it bright enough for night diving. \$49.95.

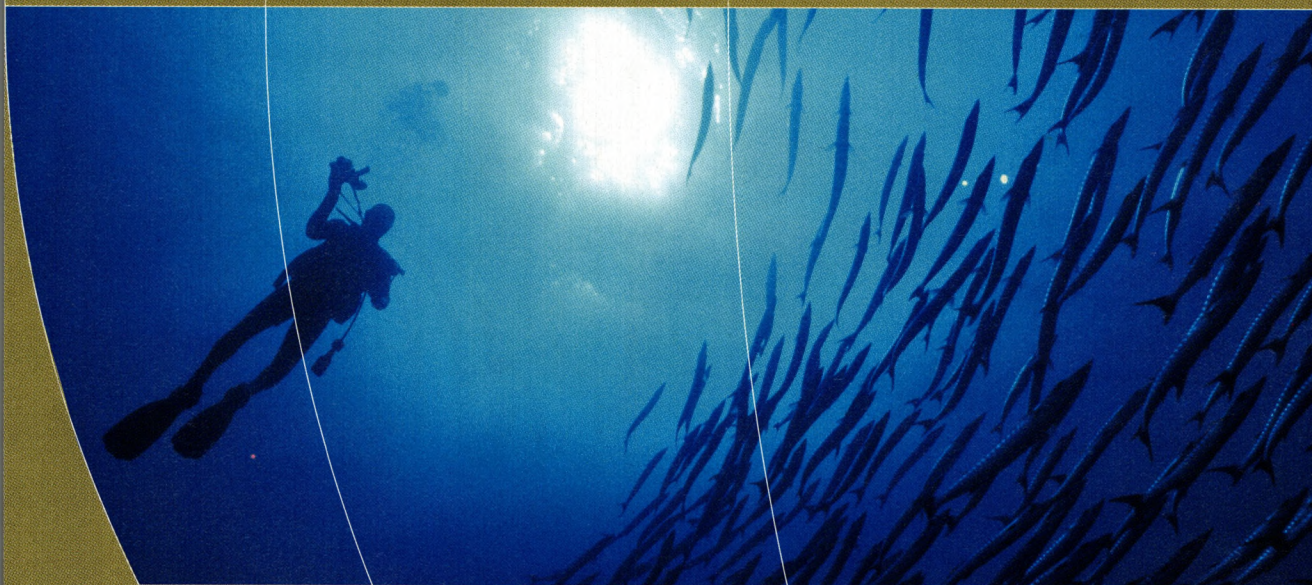


1 WHITES TROPICAL EXPLORER DRY SUIT. A packable warm-water suit with flex panels in the waist and above knees that improve range of motion. A dam protects the latex neck and wrist seals from sun and abrasion damage. The GravGuard overlay material on the lower legs prevents sand from entering your booties on shore dives. **\$799.** **2 DUI 30/30 DRY SUIT.** This new lightweight breathable dry suit is great for long duration repetitive dives. The 30/30 (named for the latitude range the suit was designed for) has a supple feel and a diagonal front zipper for easy entry. An external waist strap enables you to cinch up for a more streamlined fit. **\$1,398.** **3 XS SCUBA LOGBOOK DRY POUCH.** This clear vinyl pouch has a fold-over opening and Velcro security straps. There's even a slot for your C-card. Available in two sizes. **\$10.95** or **\$15.95.** **4 XS SCUBA 2MM TITANIUM BEANIE.** Save heat without a lot of bulk. **\$17.95.** **5 DAN PACK BY STAHL SACK.** A functional daypack with cavernous upper and lower compartments and special pockets for a DAN resuscitation mask and first-aid kits. Compression straps control the load, while breathable back padding keeps you comfy. **\$75.** **6 O'NEILL PSYCHO W/D PACK.** We went crazy for this wet/dry backpack. A multi-sized pouch system accommodates everything from clothes to computers and a separate waterproof "psycho sac" isolates soggy stuff. Excellent sternum and waist straps, along with an air-mesh backpad, make for sweat-free toting. **\$80.** **7 AKONA AKB394 TEC PACK.** It's like you're wearing nothing at all. This lightweight day pack has contoured shoulder straps, a back panel made of a breathable air-mesh material, plus adjustable sternum and waist straps. An internal mesh sleeve is specially designed to hold an optional 2.5 liter hydration bladder. **\$70.**





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Aruba

ARUBA IS ONE OF THE MOST cosmopolitan islands in the Caribbean, and it draws a cosmopolitan crowd, thanks to casinos, restaurants, shopping and world-class beaches. Off the island's beaches lies the main attraction for divers—one of the best collections of diveable shipwrecks in the Caribbean. Multiple daily flights by major U.S. carriers make for easy travel by air, and the island is a regular port of call for cruise ships. But the crowds of Oranjestad can easily be escaped with mask, fins and snorkel.

Best Dives One of the premier wreck dives in the Caribbean, the **Antilla** was scuttled by its German captain in 1940 to avoid capture by Dutch troops. On her side at 60 feet, the ship is cloaked in cup corals, tube sponges and fish life like French grunts, blue tangs and silversides. The 200-foot tanker **Star Gerren** lies on her port side in 40 feet of water off the beach near Hadicurari. Sunk intentionally four years ago to add to Aruba's already impressive collection of artificial reefs, the **Star Gerren** has been colonized by silversides and yellowtail snappers. The 250-foot freighter **Jane Sea** sits upright at 90 feet, loaded with fish life. The ship's gutted cavity makes for a long, easy swim.

Weather Temps rarely drop below 75 degrees in winter or rise above 85 degrees in summer. It's sunny and dry, and trade winds keep it comfortable.

Average Water Temp Low 80s in summer to upper 70s in winter.

Average Visibility Vis is typically in the 50- to 100-foot range.

Travel Savvy A passport or birth certificate with a valid photo ID are required for U.S. and Canadian citizens. Departure tax is usually included in airline ticket price.

Destination Links www.aruba.com, www.aruba-tourism.com and www.arubaexperience.com.

READER COMMENTS

D.B., Tewksbury, Mass.: "The weather is perfect. The island is safe and the natives are friendly. Shopping is great and there are many wonderful restaurants. There isn't anything I didn't enjoy." **F.K., Orlando, Fla.:** "Dives for all levels of experience. All easy to reach in less than 20 minutes." **R.M., Bay Park, N.Y.:** "Wrecks are large and penetrable. They are also located on reefs. Marine life is abundant." **N.O., Fort Mill, S.C.:** "Fabulous restaurants, gorgeous beaches and ideal weather."

Among Aruba's many wreck sites are a number of fairly intact airplanes.



Aruba Pro Dive (011)

297-582-5520 **Web** >

www.arubaprodiver.com **Package** > 6 dives, includes tanks and weights, \$170.

Mermaid Sport Divers

N.V. (011) 297-587-4103 **Web**

> www.scubadivers-aruba.com

Package > 1st dive is free with any dive package, any combination: e.g., pay for 3 dives, get 4 dives. Packages include transportation to and from all hotels, boat trips, tanks, weights, belt, mask, fins, snorkel, wetsuit, fresh fruits and drinks, starting from \$100.

Native Divers Aruba

(011) 297-586-4763 **Web** >

www.nativedivers.com **Package** > Resort course, \$70.

Red Sail Sports Aruba

(877) RED-SAIL, (011) 297-

586-1603 **Web** > www.red-sailaruba.com

Package > 7 days' unlimited diving for \$300. "Dive, dive and more dives" package includes 5 tanks for \$150. Combine your tanks any way you choose. Valid through Dec. 19, 2004. Some restrictions apply.

S.E.Aruba Fly 'n Dive

(011) 297-588-1150 **Web** >

www.searuba.com **Package** > 7 nights' accommodations, 7 days' diving, tanks and weights for \$550 p.p. Valid through 2004.

Unique Sports of

Aruba (011) 297-586-0096

Web > www.visitaruba.com/uniqueports **Package** >

Unlimited diving for one day, mix and match dives, tanks and weights, \$50 p.p.



A weedy sea dragon in the open water off southern Australia.

Australia

THE ISLAND CONTINENT OF AUSTRALIA is literally surrounded by world-class diving. There are great white sharks and a collection of bizarre fish in the south. There are whale sharks in the west. And off the northeast coast lies the granddaddy of all coral reefs. Each morning in other Queensland coastal towns, dive boats set sail for the Great Barrier Reef. Two-tank trips depart in the morning and get you back for dinner. Three- and four-day trips allows you extra time on more remote reefs and full-fledged live-aboards can keep you on the reef for a week to 10 days, plus get you to the Coral Sea.

Best Dives The **SS Yongala** is Australia's most famous wreck, with more than eight decades of bottom time to collect marine life including soft corals and the occasional bull and tiger shark.

Watanabe Pinnacle in the Coral Sea is an enormous open-ocean pinnacle that's orbited by trevally (jacks), chevron barracuda, tuna and unicornfish. Western Australia's **Ningaloo Reef** is one of the best places in the world for consistent encounters with whale sharks.

Weather Seasons are reversed—December through February is summer; June through August is winter. In the tropical north of Queensland, daytime air temps vary from the 80s in winter to the 90s. Southern Australia experiences 70s in winter and 80s in summer.

Average Water Temp Expect water temps in the mid-80s in summer throughout the central and northern Great Barrier Reef, but surprisingly cool mid-70s in winter.

Average Visibility Water clarity inside the Great Barrier Reef is affected by tides and surge, and averages 40 to 60 feet, with an occasional high of 100 feet. Outside the reef, visibility averages a reliable 50 to 100 feet and often soars to more than 200 feet out in the Coral Sea.

Travel Savvy A passport and visa are required. Departure tax is usually included in airline ticket price.

Destination Links www.australia.com and www.destinationqueensland.com.

Byron Bay

Planula Divers Retreat

(011) 61-2-66809134 Web >

www.planula.com.au/dive/dive.html

Cairns

Deep Sea Divers Den

(011) 61-7-40467333 Web >

www.divers-den.com Package

> Daily PADI learn to dive course, from AU\$300 p.p.

Reef Magic Cruises

(011) 61-7-40311598 Web >

www.reefmagiccruises.com

Package > Outer barrier reef day cruises, daily departures, 5 hours at the reef, morning and afternoon teas, hot and cold tropical smorgasbord lunch, presentation by on board marine naturalist, 2 dives with guide and gear (including computers), AU\$165 p.p. Price doesn't include daily AU\$7 p.p. environmental management fee.

Tusa Dive Connec-

tion (011) 61-7-40406464

Web > www.tusadive.com

Package > 3-day trips to the Great Barrier Reef, including 3 days of 2-tank dives, 6 outer reef locations, hotel transfers and lunch onboard, AU\$405 p.p., valid through March 31, 2005.

READER COMMENTS

J.T., Emporia, Kan.: "One trip is not enough to do what you want. The diving was the best." **R.B., Fishkill, N.Y.:** "Abundant coral, many different types!" **M.N., Redondo Beach, Calif.:** "The variety of sea life was extraordinary." **P.B., Honeoye Falls, N.Y.:** "I liked everything but the 30 hours of traveling it took to get there." **L.W., Chicago, Ill.:** "Liked the amazing marine life on Yongala." **M.T., Gig Harbor, Wash.:** "Incredible diversity of marine life, from anemones to sharks to sea snakes."



Caribbean reef sharks escort two divers on the wreck of the *Bahama Mama* off New Providence.

Bahamas

NEW PROVIDENCE AND GRAND BAHAMA Why schlep halfway around the world when you can hop a plane from the U.S. East Coast to New Providence and Grand Bahama and be enjoying your welcome cocktail by sunset? These two islands have made their reputation on adventure diving—from wall dives to wreck dives, shark encounters to underwater scooter adventures, blue holes to bottlenose dolphins—but you'll have almost as much fun topside, with first-class resorts to pamper you and plenty of topside diversions to while away the surface intervals.

Best Dives Walls: Off the southwest corner of New Providence, the reef takes a dizzying vertical plunge, 6,000 feet into the ocean trench known as the Tongue of the Ocean. **Wrecks:** For many divers, the only thing better than diving a wreck is diving lots of wrecks. These islands have them in spades. **Shark dives:** Choose an encounter where divemasters feed Caribbean and blacktip reef sharks, or suit up in chain mail and try it yourself. **Dolphin dives:** Off Grand Bahama, you can dive a reef with specially trained bottlenose dolphins or you can take a live-aboard to Little Bahama Bank and swim with wild spotted dolphins. **Blue holes and caverns:** You'll find plenty of excitement in the flooded vertical caves found inland and on the ocean floor. **Reefs:**

Clear, warm water and shallow coral gardens with lots of tropicals are as good for snorkelers as they are for divers, from beginners to advanced.

Weather From December to May, temperatures average 60 to 75 degrees, while summer temps average 80 to 85.

Average Water Temp Winter water temps drop to the 70s, while summer temps peak in the high 80s.

Average Visibility 80 to 100 feet.

Travel Savvy You need proof of citizenship, but a valid driver's license and birth certificate will suffice.

Destination Links www.bahamas.com and www.bahamasdiving.com.

READER COMMENTS

GRAND BAHAMA: E.B., Clearwater, Fla.: "Lots of soft corals and gorgonians. Lots of tropicals." **M.G., Tampa, Fla.:** "I liked the shark diving, dolphin snorkeling and the clean, clear, deep blue water." **NEW PROVIDENCE D.J., Trophy Club, Texas:** "Easy access from the U.S." **J.L., Brigham, Utah:** "Really liked how friendly everyone was." **J.B., Philadelphia, Pa.:** "Abundant sharks and big rays. Water was awesome with great visibility."

Grand Bahama

Grand Bahama Scuba (242) 373-

6775 Web > www.grandbahamascuba.com

Package > 10-dive package, \$275.

UNEXSO (800) 992-3483 Web > www.unexso.com.

Xanadu Undersea Adventures

(800) 327-8150, (242) 352-3811 Web >

www.xanadudive.com Package > 2

nights' accommodations, 2-tank boat

Continued on page 68 >>>



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DVD at: diving.bahamas.com



Visit These Bahamas Diving Association Operators on Our Website diving.bahamas.com:

ABACO

Abaco Dive Adventures 242-367-2963
Brenda's Dive Center International... 800-780-9941
Dive Abaco Ltd. 800-247-5338
Dive Guana 242-365-5178
Froggies Out Island Adventures Ltd. ... 242-366-0431
Treasure Divers 800-327-1584
Walker's Cay Undersea Adventures ... 800-327-8150

ANDROS

Seascape Inn 242-369-0342
Small Hope Bay Lodge 800-223-6961

BIMINI

Bill & Nowdla Keefe's
Bimini Undersea 800-348-4644
Scuba Bimini 800-848-4073

CAT ISLAND

Greenwood Dive & Beach Resort 242-342-3053
Hawk's Nest Dive Center 242-342-7050

ELEUTHERA/HARBOUR ISLAND

Valentine's Dive Center 242-333-2080
Ocean Fox Diving 877-252-3594

EXUMA

Exuma Scuba Adventures 242-336-2893
Peace & Plenty 800-525-2210

GRAND BAHAMA/FREEPORT

Grand Bahama Scuba 242-373-6775
Sunn Odyssey Divers 242-373-4014
UNEXSO 800-992-3483
Xanadu Undersea Adventures 800-327-8150

LONG ISLAND

Stella Maris Inn 800-426-0466
Cape Santa Maria Beach Resort 800-663-7090

NEW PROVIDENCE/NASSAU

Bahama Divers Ltd. 800-398-DIVE
Dive Dive Dive 800-368-3483
Land Shark Divers 800-327-8150
Nassau Scuba Centre 800-327-4100
Stuart Cove's Dive Bahamas 888-35-SHARK

SAN SALVADOR

Riding Rock Resort 800-272-1492

DIVE LIVEBOARDS

Aqua Cat Cruises 888-327-9600
Blackbeard's Cruises 800-327-9600
Bottom Time Adventures 800-234-8464
Cat Ppalu Cruises 800-327-9600
Juliet Sailing and Diving 866-5-JULIET
Nekton Diving Cruises 800-899-6753
Sea Dragon 954-522-0161
Sea Fever Diving Cruises 800-443-3837

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Bahamas

Continued from page 66

dive, tanks and weights, from \$131.

New Providence

Bahama Divers (800) 398-3483,
 (242) 393-5644 **Web** >

www.bahamadivers.com.

Dive Dive Dive Ltd. Resort

(800) 368-3483, (242) 362-1401 **Web**

> www.divedivedive.com **Package** >

8 days, 7 nights, 6 days of diving, 2
 dives per day, airport transfers, trip to
 grocery store, fresh-baked bread and
 coffee daily, tanks and weights, \$945
 p.p., dbl. occ.

Diver's Haven (800) 684-DIVE,
 (242) 363-6707 **Web** > [www.divers-](http://www.divers-haven.com)

[haven.com](http://www.divers-haven.com).

Nassau Scuba Centre (800)

805-5485, (242) 362-1964 **Web** >

www.divenassau.com **Package** > 7

nights at Orange Hill Beach Inn, 6 days
 of diving, breakfast, \$748 p.p., dbl.
 occ., taxes and gratuities included,
 price depends on season.

Stuart Cove's Dive Bahamas

(800) 646-3333, (954) 524-5755 **Web**

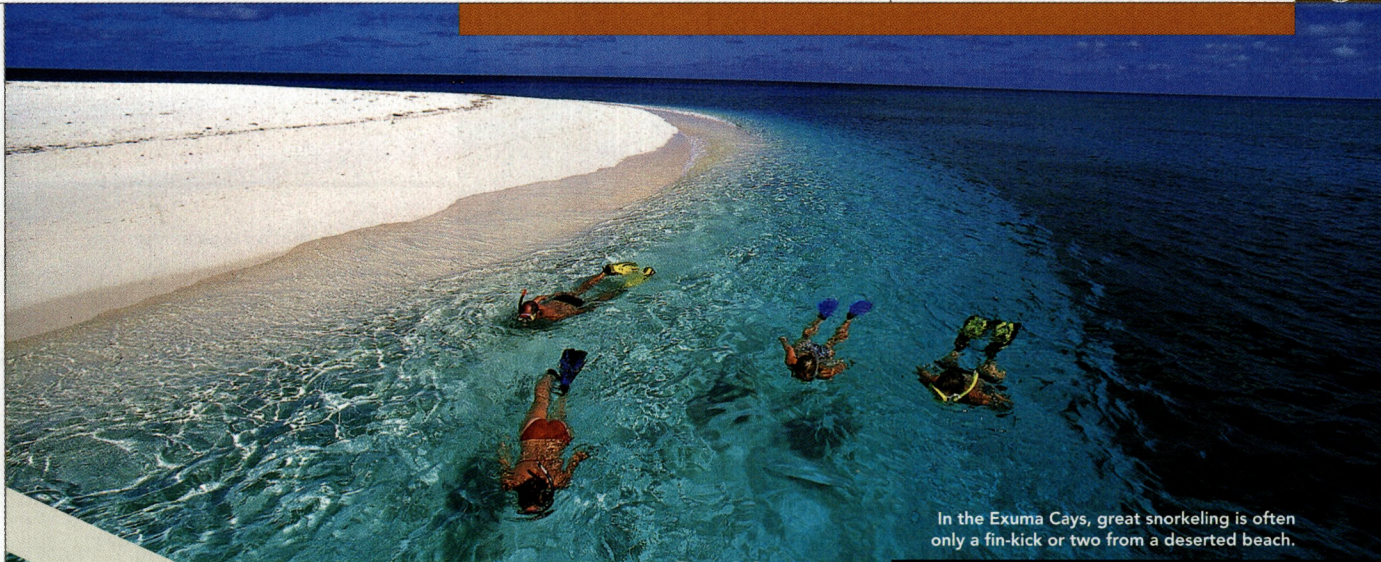
> www.stuartcove.com/rsd **Package**

> 3 nights at Holiday Inn Nassau, 2
 days of 2-tank dives, and transfers to
 dive shop every day, \$296 p.p., dbl.
 occ., and includes all hotel taxes and
 service charges.

An elkhorn coral stand
 on New Providence's
 Southwest Reef.



STEPHEN FRINK



In the Exuma Cays, great snorkeling is often only a fin-kick or two from a deserted beach.

Bahamas

OUT ISLANDS Charming and unspoiled, the Out Islands may be one of the best kept secrets in diving. Here's your guide to choosing the one you'll love the most.

Best Dives **The Abacos.** This archipelago stretches northward on the east end of Little Bahama Bank. Diving is done on the reef line or in inland blue holes. **Andros.** There are countless diveable blue holes on Andros, and along its east coast is the deep trench, the Tongue of the Ocean. **The Biminis.** A string of islands with everything from shallow coral gardens to a stunning drop-off that starts at 140 feet. **Eleuthera and Harbour Island.** Eleuthera features a fringing reef with shallow sites and wrecks. **The Exumas.** Scattered along the eastern leg of Great Bahama Bank, this vast island chain has walls, reefs, shallow and deep blue holes. **Long Island.** Dive anywhere except for a windswept stretch on the western shore. Elsewhere, anything goes—walls, reefs, coral caves, shark encounters. **San Salvador.** This tiny island offers a mighty wall that starts just 500 yards offshore. **Walker's Cay.** "Shark Rodeo" attracts more sharks—up to 100 at a time—than any other shark dive in the Bahamas.

Weather From December to May, temperatures average 60 to 75 degrees, while summer temps average 80 to 85 degrees.

Average Water Temp Winter water temps drop to the 70s, while summer temps peak in the high 80s.

Average Visibility 80 to 100 feet.

Travel Savvy You'll need proof of citizenship such as a passport or a birth certificate and driver's license.

Destination Links www.bahama-out-islands.com and www.bahamasdiving.com.

Abacos

Brendal's Dive Center, Ltd. (800) 780-9941, (242) 365-4411 **Web** > www.brendal.com.

Dive Abaco! (800) 247-5338, (242) 367-2787 **Web** > www.diveabaco.com **Package** > 8 days, 7 nights at Regattas, 5 days of 2-tank dives, tanks and weights for \$599 p.p., including taxes and service charges, 4-person min., 6-person max.

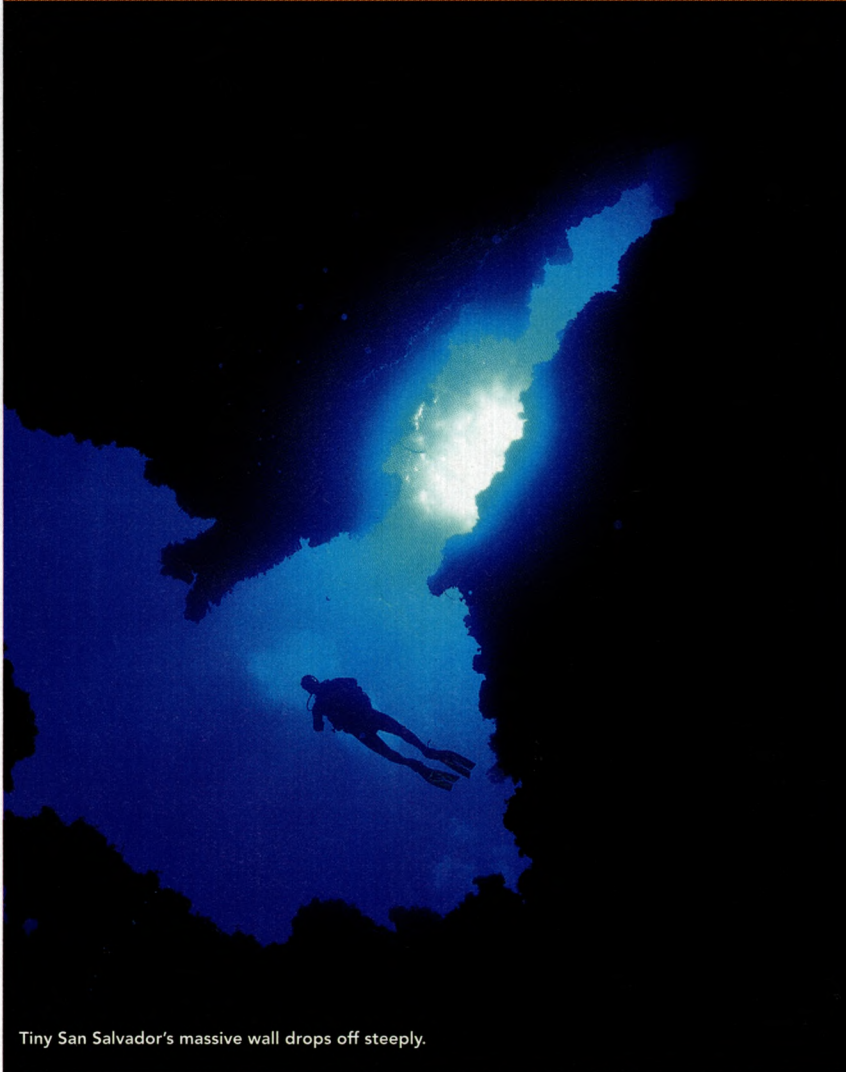
Treasure Divers - Bahamas (242) 365-8465 **Web** > www.treasure-divers.com **Package** > Please visit our web site for specials.

Andros

Small Hope Bay Lodge (800) 223-6961, (242) 368-2014 **Web** > www.small-hope.com **Package** > All-inclusive 8 days, 7 nights in a beach cottage, 3 dives daily, 1 night dive, all meals including hors d'oeuvres and bar, airport transfers, use of windsurfers, kayaks, bike, nature trails,

READER COMMENTS

BIMINI R.B., Round Rock, Texas: "It was exciting to land in the water upon arriving in a seaplane. There aren't a lot of topside activities, so it's perfect for diving and relaxing." **SAN SALVADOR C.H., San Jose, Calif.:** "Best walls ever! 200-foot vis. Hammerheads and dolphins. Healthy reef." **WALKER'S CAY: J.O., Holland, Mich.:** "The diving was excellent!" **OTHER OUT ISLANDS: R.F., Ellisville, Mo.:** "Healthy reefs and much variety of life." **L.S., Waterbury, Conn.:** "Great corals and huge variety of marine life. Nice warm water temp and generally very good vis—around 100 feet."



Tiny San Salvador's massive wall drops off steeply.

Escape sailboat and hot tub. Price is \$1,585 for adults, \$1,240 for teen divers, including hotel taxes, tolls and service charges. Extra discount for groups.

Bimini

Bill & Nowdla Keefe's Bimini Undersea (800) 348-4644, (242) 347-3089 **Web** > www.biminiundersea.com
Package > 8 days, 7 nights, 18 to 21 dives, hotel and ground transfers, from \$1,036.
Frog International Inc. (954) 963-0757 **Web** > www.thedrymartini.com.
Scuba Bimini (800) 848-4073, (954) 462-3400 **Web** > www.nealwatson.com
Package > 2 nights, 4 dives, airfare from Ft. Lauderdale, transfers, tanks and weights

for \$380 p.p., dbl. occ., taxes included.

Exumas

Exuma Scuba Adventures (800) 525-2210, (242) 336-2893 **Web** > www.exumascuba.com.

Harbour Island

Valentine's Dive Center (800) 383-6480, (242) 333-2080 **Web** > www.valentinesdive.com **Package** > 7 nights, 12 dives, tanks and weights, \$850 p.p.

Long Island

Cape Santa Maria Beach Resort (800) 663-7090, (242) 338-5273 **Web** > www.capesantamaria.com **Pack-**

age > 20 percent off regular room rate when you mention *Scuba Diving*.

Stella Maris Resort Club (800)

426-0466, (954) 359-8236 **Web** >

www.stellamarisresort.com **Package** > 7

nights' accommodations with ocean view, flight transfer from Nassau, 3 meals daily, hotel transfers, house wine with dinner and 3 drinks per day for \$1,782 p.p., dbl. occ., valid through winter 2004.

San Salvador

Riding Rock Inn Resort and

Marina (800) 272-1492, (954) 359-8353

Web > www.ridingrock.com.

Walker's Cay

Sea Below at Walker's Cay

Hotel and Marina (800) WALKERS

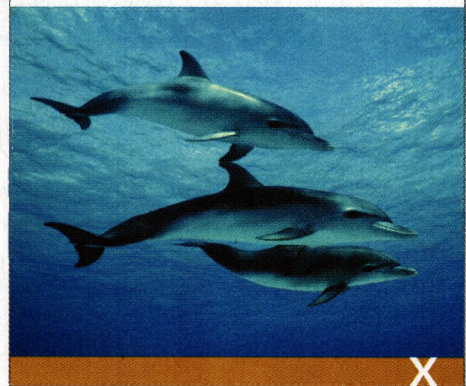
(925-5377), (954) 359-1400 **Web** >

www.walkerscay.com **Package** > 3 days' accommodations and diving, 2 morning dives and 1 afternoon dive, round-trip airfare from Ft. Lauderdale, breakfast and dinner daily, and shark rodeo. Price is \$524 p.p., dbl. occ., including taxes and gratuities.

Walker's Cay Undersea Adventures (800) 513-5257, (954) 462-3400

Web > www.nealwatson.com **Package** >

3 nights at Walker's Cay Hotel and Marina, 3 dives per day, shark dive, ground transfers, daily breakfast and dinner, tanks and weights, \$520 p.p., dbl. occ., taxes included.



STEPHEN FRINK (TOP LEFT); BARRY KULICK (BOTTOM RIGHT)



Baja, Mexico

FROM THE SOUTHERN HALF of the 800-mile-long Baja Peninsula, divers have access to the best of two worlds—the eastern Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Cortez. Included in the diverse list of 750 resident species are big-ticket animals like gray whales, whale sharks, hammerheads, giant Pacific manta rays and sea lions, and you can see it all from day boats and live-aboards that depart from La Paz and the twin resort cities of Cabo San Lucas and San Jose del Cabo (collectively known as Los Cabos). Just don't expect Caribbean-style vis or coral formations.

Best Dives West coast or east coast, day boats from towns along the southern shores head to seamounts and pinnacles for big-ticket pelagics. Out in the deep, 220 miles southwest of Cabo, is the **Socorro island chain**, also known as Islas Revillagigedo, an uninhabited, volcanic archipelago that offers tremendous diving on its lava-forged flanks. Live-aboard boats out of Cabo San Lucas make the trip.

Weather Hot, balmy summers with highs in the 90s and pleasant winters, when temperatures range from the 60s at night to 80s during the day.

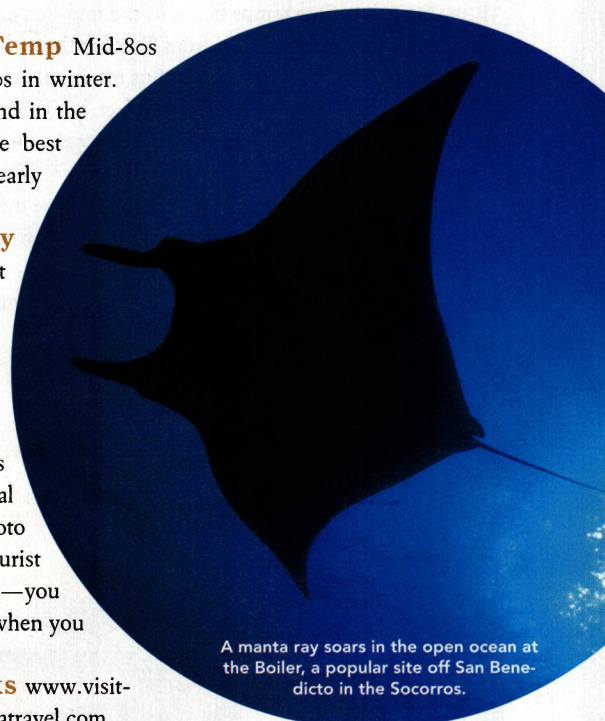
Average Water Temp Mid-80s in summer and mid-60s in winter.

The diving is year-round in the Sea of Cortez, but the best time is late June to early November.

Average Visibility Fluctuates from 70 feet in winter to 90 feet in summer.

Travel Savvy A passport is always the best option, but U.S. and Canadian citizens can get by on an original birth certificate and photo ID. You'll be issued a tourist visa on arrival. Keep it—you need to turn it back in when you leave.

Destination Links www.visit-cabo.com and www.bajatravel.com.



A manta ray soars in the open ocean at the Boiler, a popular site off San Benedicto in the Socorro Islands.

Amigos del Mar de los Cabos

(800) 344-3349, (624) 143-0505 **Web** > www.amigosdelmar.com **Package** > 2-tank boat dive for \$66, 4th day is discounted 50 percent; seasonally available.

Andromeda Divers (011) 624-143-2765 **Web** > scubadivecabo.com.mx

Package > One day of in-bay dives for \$60, equipment rental, \$15.

Baja Expeditions (800) 843-6967, (858) 581-3311 **Web** > www.bajaex.com

Package > 3 nights, 2 days' diving on the 52-foot *Rio Rita* or the 28-foot *Thresher* (with up to 3 dives per day), breakfast, lunch, snacks and happy hour, \$375 p.p., dbl. occ., valid May through November.

Cabo Acuadeportes (001) 52-624-143-0117 **Web** > www.cabowatersports.com.

Funbaja Adventure (800) 667-5362, (011) 52-112-15884 **Web** > www.deepdiscoveries.com **Package** > 5 nights, 6 days, 4 days of 2-tank boat dives, breakfast and lunch on dive days, airport transfers, \$745 p.p., dbl. occ., tax included.

Land's End Divers (011) 52-624-143-2200 **Web** > www.mexonline.com/landsend **Package** > 3 nights, 2 days of 2-tank dives, \$375 p.p., plus taxes.

The Cortez Club (011) 52-612-121-6120 **Web** > www.cortezclub.com **Package** > 4 nights at La Concha Beach Resort, 3 days of 2-tank dives, La Paz airport transfers, soft weights, certified dive-master, lunch and soft drinks on dive days, \$753.30, plus tax.

READER COMMENTS

A.P., Napa, Calif.: "The price was right—good value. Good food. Cold beer. Warm-water diving and excellent marine life." **C.M., Shelby, Tenn.:** "The landscape was very impressive, the people friendly and the weather good." **J.B., Yardley, Pa.:** "Great night-clubs, great tequila and good value for the U.S. money." **L.C., Santa Cruz, Calif.:** "Baja's marine life is incredible." **R.W., Linden, Mich.:** "Good corals, whales and sea lion colony. But visibility was only fair."

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MORE PACKAGES!

If you're planning your next dive trip or just want to do some online daydreaming, make www.scubadiving.com/tripfinder your first stop on the web. Read member trip reports to see what other divers have to say about their recent dive trips, and peruse photo galleries for a diver's-eye view of destinations from Anguilla to Vanuatu.

ScubaDiving.com's TripFinder offers complete, up-to-the-minute dive operator information year-round. With our enhanced listings, you can see photos, download video and find the package that's right for you.



The Bay Islands

ROATAN, UTILA, GUANAJA and 65 other small Caribbean cays comprise Honduras's Bay Islands. Located just 12 to 35 miles off the country's northern coast, these tropical clusters are the exposed summits of an undersea mountain range known as the Bonacca Ridge. Here in the warm Central American waters are wrecks, macro photography opportunities and pristine seamounts. There's literally something for everyone—no matter the skill level—including deep walls, fringing reefs, and dolphin and shark dives.

Best Dives The 300-foot **Odyssey**, the islands' newest wreck, rests upright on a sandy patch in 120 feet of water off Roatan's north wall. The 187-foot **Jado Trader** is perhaps Guanaja's most popular dive, a wreck sitting on its side in 90 to 110 feet of water and stuffed with silversides. Utila's **Black Hill** is a pinnacle that comes to within 35 feet of the surface and offers a chance to see jacks, hammerheads or a whale shark. Cayos Cochinos' **Toon Town** is macro paradise with an unbelievable array of critters including arrow crabs, flamingo tongues and blue bell tunicates.

Weather Daytime temps hover in the mid-80s and fall to the high 60s at night. The rainy season occurs from October through January.

Average Water Temp Low 80s in summer to high 70s in winter.

Average Visibility Averages 80 feet, but can top out at 120 feet at some offshore seamounts. Runoff during the rainy season, October to January, can limit vis to between 50 and 75 feet.

Travel Savvy Eco resorts and bungalows are the lodging of choice in the Bay Islands. Expect ceiling fans and vented screen windows with porches. A valid passport is required. The departure tax is \$27.

Destination Links www.hondurasinfo.hn and www.letsgehonduras.com.



Within sight of shore, the fringing reefs of the Bay Islands begin in shallow water and slope down gradually.

STEPHEN FRINK



READER COMMENTS

GUANAJA M.G.: "The health of the reef was really incredible and lush, with every imaginable type of coral and sponge. The dive sites typically had great structure and were fun to dive. Fish life was abundant, including lots of green morays and large groupers."

ROATAN S.W., Clayton, Mo.: "Wonderful climate, relaxed atmosphere and tons of natural beauty." **C.A., San Antonio, Texas:** "Good diving, accommodations and meal value for the dollar. Friendly people." **A.D., Shoreview, Minn.:** "Liked the variety of coral, including pillar coral and lettuce coral." **M.J., Indialantic, Fla.:** "Great walls, excellent vis, sites close to shore." **S.L., Boise, Idaho:** "Abundant fish life, healthy reef, uncrowded sites, friendly fish, friendly locals. This is our favorite dive destination by far." **UTILA W.C., Fort Campbell, Ky:** "A step back in time—very relaxing, low-key atmosphere. A great value for the dollar." **E.H., Livermore, Calif.:** "Whale sharks, lots of healthy corals." **A.S., New York, N.Y.:** "Great views of whale sharks, dolphins, seahorses." **E.M., Colorado Springs, Colo.:** "Extremely inexpensive. Not many tourists. Swam with whale sharks!"

Guanaja

Posada del Sol (800) 642-3483, (011) 504-237-4982 Web > www.posadadel-sol.com Package > All-inclusive 7 nights, 2 morning dives and 1 afternoon dive daily, 1 night dive, unlimited shore diving, tanks and weights, bilingual divemasters, unlimited snorkeling and kayaking, airport trans-

fers, welcome cocktail, all meals, coffee, juice or tea delivered to your room every morning before breakfast, afternoon appetizers by the pool, fresh water and fruit on the boat, tennis and basketball courts, weight room, indoor games and weekly resort activities for \$900 p.p., dbl. occ.

Villa at Dunbar Rock / Nautilus Dive Resort (952) 953-4124 Web >

www.usdivetravel.com/R-HONDURAS-Nautilus.html Package > 7 nights' lodging, 5 days of guided 3-tank boat dives and 1 tank on last morning, 1 night dive (weather permitting), 3 meals daily, round-trip air

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transfers to island and boat shuttles to dive shop. Price is \$997 p.p., dbl. occ., and \$849 p.p., dbl. occ., for nondivers. Solo guests add an additional \$300 per week.

Roatan

Anthony's Key Resort (800) 443-0717, (954) 929-0090 **Web** > [www.antho-](http://www.antho-nyskey.com)

[nyskey.com](http://www.antho-nyskey.com) **Package** > 7 nights, 3 single-tank boat dives daily, 2 night dives, buoyancy control workshop, tanks and weights, snorkeling, kayaking, canoeing, horseback riding, 3 meals daily, welcome cocktail, Island Fiesta Night, airport transfers, tropical picnic on Tabyana Beach, entrance to Roatan Museum and fish ID slide show for

Two divers explore Roatan's newest wreck, the 300-foot-long *Odyssey*.



\$599 p.p., dbl. occ.

Bay Islands Beach Resort (800) 4-ROATAN, (610) 399-1884 **Web** > www.bibr.com **Package** > 8 days, 7 nights, 15 boat dives, 1 night dive, unlimited shore diving, guided night snorkels, Natural Aquarium Snorkel Trail, Spooky Channel, 3 meals daily, airport transfers and welcome drink from \$799 p.p., dbl. occ., during the high season, and from \$699 p.p., dbl. occ., during the low season.

CoCo View Resort (800) 282-8932, (352) 588-4131 **Web** > www.cocoviewresort.com **Package** > 7 nights, 2 boat dives daily including 1 tank at selected site and optional wall dive (up to 4 tanks daily), unlimited beach dives including the barrier reef wall, the *Prince Albert* wreck, night diving, kayaking, airport transfers, 3 meals daily, and barbecues and picnics on private Hawksbay Cay for \$775 p.p., dbl. occ.

Inn of the Last Resort (888) 238-8266, (011) 504-445-1903 **Web** > www.innoflastresort.com **Package** > 8 days, 7 nights, 3 dives a day plus 1 night dive, unlimited shore diving, airport transfers, welcome drink, 3 meals daily and snacks at happy hour. Buy one package at regular price and receive the second at half price.

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email: rick@bonnebeach.com
www.fantasyislandresort.com

Oak Bay Resort (011) 504-435-2337 **Web** > www.roatandiving.com
Package > 7 nights, 12 boat dives, unlimited shore dives, all meals and a clothing-optional sun area for \$465. Equipment rentals are available.

Reef House Resort (800) 328-8897, (210) 681-2888 **Web** > www.reefhouseressort.com **Package** > 7 nights, 2 boat dives per day with up to 3 tanks, 1 night dive, unlimited day or night shore diving, tanks and weights, and all meals for \$690 p.p., dbl. occ., or \$650 p.p., triple occ.

Sueno Del Mar Resort (866) 300-2769, (305) 735-8498 **Web** > www.suenodelmar.com **Package** > 7 days with 3 dives per day, 1 night dive and airport transfers for \$377 p.p., dbl. occ., plus tax.

Utila

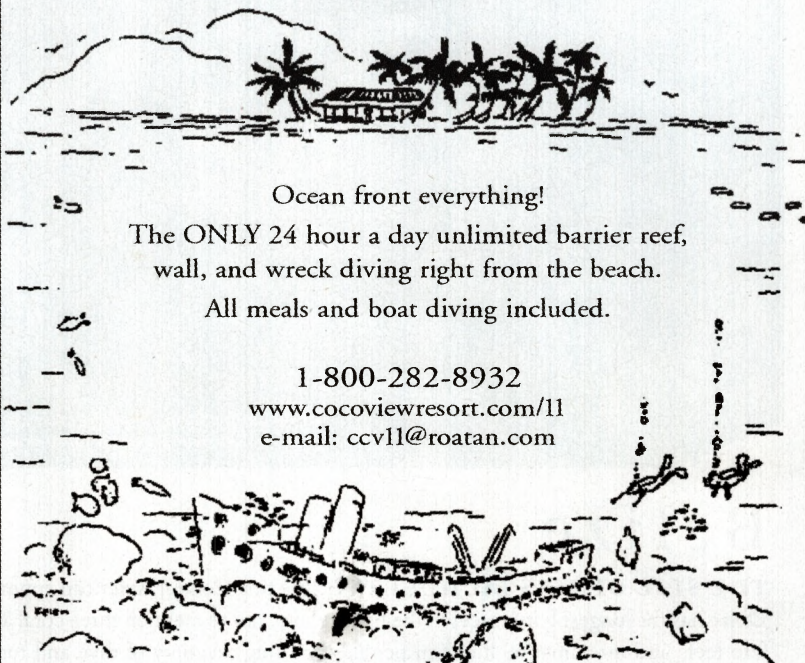
Bay Islands College of Diving (011) 504-425-3291 **Web** > dive-utila.com **Package** > Scuba diving certifications, open-water through instructor.

Laguna Beach Resort (800) 66-UTILA, (337) 893-0013 **Web** > www.utila.com **Package** > 7 nights, 8 days, 6 days of diving with 3 boat dives daily, 2 night dives, unlimited shore dives, airport transfers, 3 meals daily and unlimited kayaking for \$940 p.p., dbl. occ., plus 16 percent tax.

Utila Dive Centre-Mango Inn (888) 322-DIVE, (011) 504-425-3326 **Web** > www.utiladive-centre.com **Package** > 7 nights, 6 days diving with 3 dives per day, 1 night dive, daily breakfast and dinner, airport transfers and welcome cocktail for \$659 p.p., dbl. occ., all taxes included.

Utila Lodge (800) 282-8932 **Web** > www.utilalodge.com **Package** > All-inclusive dedicated dive resort; special group incentives.

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At Ambergris Caye's Shark Ray Alley, a nurse shark cruises over a shallow turtle grass bed.

Belize

THE SIZE OF MASSACHUSETTS, the tiny Central American country of Belize has the longest barrier reef in the hemisphere, not to mention three coral atolls, faro reefs and more marine life than people. Boasting a variety of dive and topside experiences unequaled by countries 10 times its size, Belize packs a mighty vacation wallop—pristine dive sites, big animal encounters in Hol Chan Marine Reserve, frequent whale shark sightings in the south, remote resort getaways, Mayan ruins, deep-sea fishing, jungle trekking, wildlife sanctuaries and the world-famous Blue Hole.

Best Dives **The Elbow** at Turneffe Islands Atoll is one of the country's most prolific wall dives, where swift currents along the drop-off bring in big pelagics, including jacks and permit, as well as weirdly warped barrel sponges. **Shark Ray Alley** in Hol Chan Marine Reserve off Ambergris is Belize's version of Stingray City, where snorkelers can swim with rays and nurse sharks. **Laughing Bird Caye** off Placencia is a popular picnic spot for snorkelers, but divers will love the reefs offshore, where macro critters abound.

Weather Belize's climate is tropical, but a Caribbean breeze moderates hot summer temps on the coast, cayes and atolls. Expect summer highs in the mid-80s and lows in the mid-70s. Winter is cooler, with highs in the low 80s and lows in the high 60s.

Average Water Temp The waters off Belize are bathtub-warm, ranging from the high 70s in winter to mid-80s in summer.

Average Visibility On the barrier reef and atolls, visibility is often 100 feet or more, but can be a bit lower inside the massive reef.

Travel Savvy A valid passport is required and there is a \$20 departure tax.

Destination Links www.belize tourism.org.

READER COMMENTS

AMBERGRIS CAYE S.E., Syracuse, N.Y.:

"Lots of eagle rays, sharks, and grouper that follow you like puppy dogs!" **J.M., New York, N.Y.:** "Everyone was very friendly, no crowds, great."

T.R., Laredo, Texas: "I really enjoyed the balance between tranquility and nightlife. The island is mostly peaceful and quiet, and the nightlife is there if you look for it."

N.B., Richmond, Va.: "Great people, uncrowded dive boats, lots of surface options (almost too many!). Easy to get to. Great value."

CAYE CAULKER J.S., Boulder, Colo.:

"Great food, inexpensive, lots of people from around the world." **N.W., Folsom, Calif.:**

"Good, inexpensive food. Beautiful waters and wildlife."

PLACENCIA K.B., Tempe, Ariz.: "Very relaxed—only shorts, T-shirts and flip-flops required. What a vacation is supposed to be—fun and relaxing."

THE ATOLLS T.O., Monroeville, Pa.: "Secluded, private, calm, relaxing."

J.G., Whittier, Calif.: "Lots of spotted eagle rays, healthy reef and animals. Great photo ops!"

J.W., Kansas City, Kan.: "Friendly people. Best value for vacation ever! Amazing place!"

Ambergris Caye

Amigos Del Mar (011) 501-226-2706

Web > www.amigosdive.com **Package** >

Please check web page for specials.

Aqua Dives Belize (800) 641-2994,

(011) 501-226-3415 **Web** >

www.aquadives.com **Package** > 7 nights at

Aqua Marine Suites, 5 days of 2-tank dives, tanks and weights, transfers, round-trip interisland air, \$699 p.p., dbl. occ., taxes included. Valid May 1 to Dec. 14, 2004.

Belize Tradewinds (800) 451-7776, (414) 258-6687 **Web** >

www.tradewindsparadisevillas.com **Pack-**

age > 5 nights at Tradewinds Paradise Villas, 3 days of 2-tank dives and 1 night dive for \$479 p.p., dbl. occ., valid May 1 to Nov. 15, 2004.

Blue Hole Dive Center (011) 501-226-2982 **Web** > www.bluedive.com

Package > 7 nights at Banana Beach



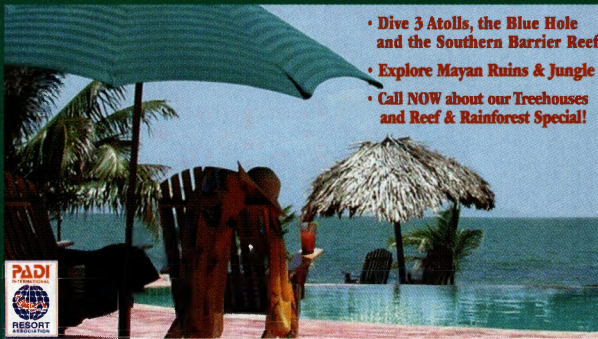
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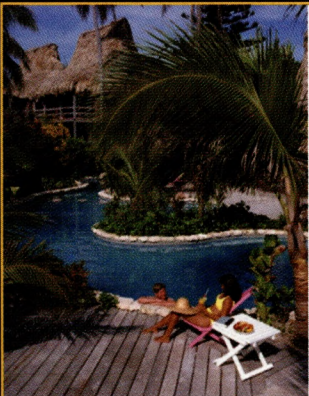
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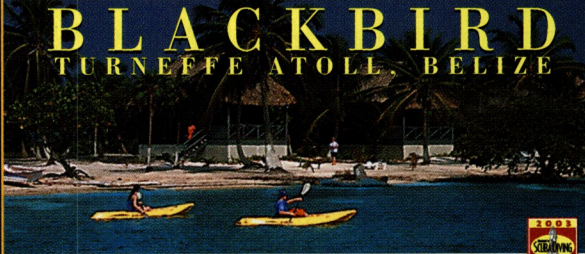
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Playa Blanca Dive & Beach Club (800) 499-3002, (888) 772-9937
Web: www.divebelize.com **Package:** 8 days, 7 nights, 5 days of 2-tank boat dives (10 dives total), visit to Shark Ray Alley, upgrade to Blue Hole for \$153, welcome cocktail, breakfast and dinner daily, air transfers from Belize and ground transfers for \$999 p.p., dbl. occ., \$793 p.p. for non-divers, groups of 6 to 8 get penthouse and private dive boat for \$999 p.p., valid until Dec. 14, 2004.

Ramon's Village Resort (800) 624-4215, (601) 649-1990 **Web** > www.ramons.com **Package** > 7 nights, 6 days of 2-tank dives and daily breakfast for \$967.58 p.p., dbl. occ., valid from May 15 to Dec. 15, 2004.

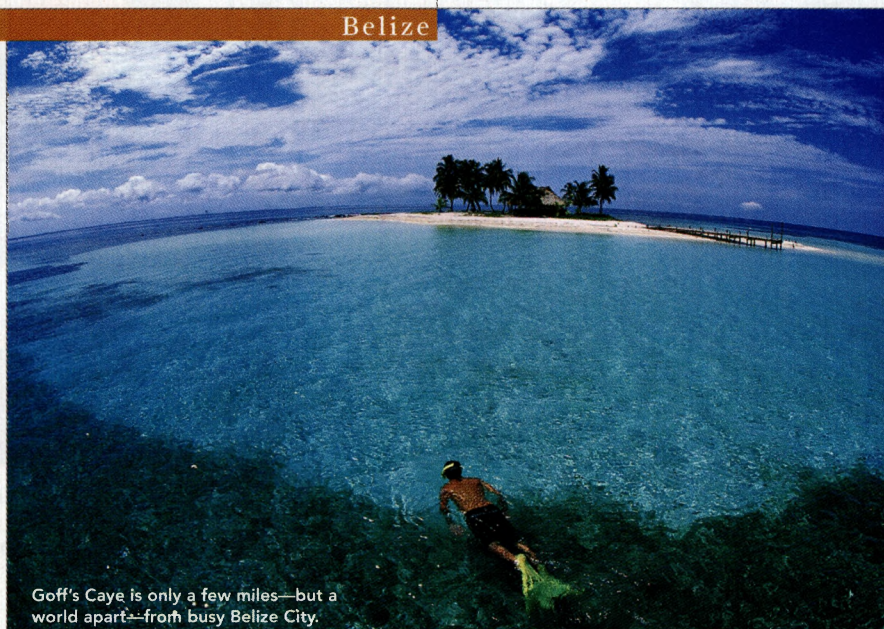
Belize City

Hugh Parkey's Belize Dive Connection (888) 223-5403, (011) 501-223-4526 **Web** > www.belizediving.com **Package** > 8 days, 5 days' diving, all meals, transfers and taxes, from \$1,250 p.p., dbl. occ.; 5 days, 3 days' diving, from \$650 p.p., dbl. occ.

Sea Sports Belize (011) 501-223-5505 **Web** > www.seasportsbelize.com **Package** > 7 nights, 8 days, 5 days of diving, including 2 dives on the barrier reef, 2 dives on Turneffe Islands Atoll and 1 day at the Blue Hole off Lighthouse Reef Atoll. Includes transfers and 3 meals daily for \$1,149.99 p.p., dbl. occ., or 1 day with 2 tanks, lunch, soda and water, fruit, tanks and weights for \$100 p.p., valid through Dec. 1, 2004.

Caye Caulker

Belize Diving Services (800) 498-2282, (011) 501-226-0143 **Web** > www.belizedivingservices.com **Package** > 3 days' diving including 2 tanks at Hol



Goff's Caye is only a few miles—but a world apart—from busy Belize City.

Chan Marine Reserve, 3 tanks and lunch at Turneffe Islands Atoll and 2 tanks with lunch at Sergeant's Caye, all equipment and T-shirt for \$250. Open-water certification, a 4-day course and T-shirt, is \$250. Dive 3 days and receive a T-shirt and 10 percent off the total price.

Dangriga

Blue Marlin Lodge (800) 798-1558, (011) 501-522-2243 **Web** > www.bluemarlinlodge.com **Package** > All-inclusive 4 nights, 3 days' diving (2 dives daily plus 1 night dive), tanks and weights, 3 meals daily, liaison assistance at the airport, airport transfers and welcome drink for \$1,095 p.p., dbl. occ., includes room and sales tax. Nightly rates available.

Hopkins

Hamanasi Dive & Adventure Resort (877) 552-DIVE, (011) 501-520-7073 **Web** > www.hamanasi.com **Package** > 8 days, 7 nights, your choice of barrier reef diving or snorkeling, magical Mayan history tour, caves and jungle adventure, rain forest birding, jungle river kayaking, Mayflower Waterfall hike or jaguar preserve excursion. Includes breakfast, dinner, air and land transfers within Belize for \$1,071 p.p., dbl. occ., from May 1 to Dec. 14, 2004. Upgrade to atoll trips is available.

Second Nature Divers (011) 501-523-7038 **Web** > www.belizediversity.com **Package** > 3 days, 6 dives, tanks and weights for \$200. Accommodations available on caye or mainland.

Glovers Reef Atoll

Glovers Atoll Resort & Island Lodge (011) 501-520-5016 **Web** > www.glovers.com.bz **Package** > Week-long stay, thatch cabin on the beach, \$199 p.p. plus hotel tax; \$149 in tents or dorm; \$99 for camping. Includes round-trip boat from Sittee River to island with 10 percent discount on 6 dives, 15 percent discount on 12 dives.

Lighthouse Reef Atoll

Lighthouse Reef Resort (800) 423-3114, (863) 439-6600 **Web** > www.scubabelize.com **Package** > 7 nights, 17 dives including the Blue Hole and 1 night dive, 3 tanks per day except 2 tanks on Friday, all meals and air transfers for \$1,645 p.p., dbl. occ.

Placencia

Inn at Robert's Grove and Dive Center (800) 565-9757, (011) 501-523-3565 **Web** > www.robertsgrove.com

Package > 7 nights, 8 days, 5 days' diving, round-trip air from Belize, land transfers, all meals including 3-course dinners, kayaks, canoes, sailboats, windsurf boards, bicycles and fitness equipment, snorkeling or eco trips for \$1,843 p.p., dbl. occ., including tax and service charge, valid until May 31, 2004.

Nauti-One Dive Shop (800) 688-0377, (011) 501-523-3595 **Web** > nauti-calinnbelize.com **Package** > 7 nights, 5 days of 2 dives with 2 tanks each, all meals, transfers and taxes. Check web or call for current rates.

St. George's Caye

St. George's Lodge (800) 678-6871, (941) 488-3788 **Web** > www.good-

diving.com **Package** > Once a month, Saturday to Saturday, 3 dives a day including 1 night dive, transfers from Belize, all meals, tanks and weights for \$1,597 to \$1,931 p.p., taxes included.

Tobacco Caye

Tobacco Caye Diving (011) 501-614-9907 **Web** > www.tobaccocayediving.com **Package** > 7 nights, 6 days of diving, 2 night dives, unlimited shore diving, all meals and all transfers from Dangriga for \$99. Book online for a welcome bottle of rum or T-shirt.

Turneffe Islands Atoll

Blackbird Caye Resort (888) 271-3483, (305) 969-7947 **Web** > www.black-

birdresort.com **Package** > 7 nights, 3 dives per day (up to 17 total dives) to Blue Hole, Half Moon Caye and Long Caye Wall at Lighthouse Reef Atoll, transfers from Belize City and meals from \$1,295 p.p.

Turneffe Flats (800) 815-1304, (605) 578-1304 **Web** > www.tflats.com **Package** > 7 nights, 6 days, 3 dives per day including a trip to the Blue Hole, unlimited shore diving, one night dive, land and sea transfers, 3 meals daily, evening hors d'oeuvres and morning coffee or tea served to your room, from \$1,495.

Turneffe Island Lodge (800) 874-0118, (713) 236-7739 **Web** > www.turneffelodge.com **Package** > 7 nights, 17 dives, day trip to the Blue Hole, 1 night dive, airport transfers, all meals and snacks for \$1,683.07 p.p., dbl. occ., taxes included.

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Bermuda

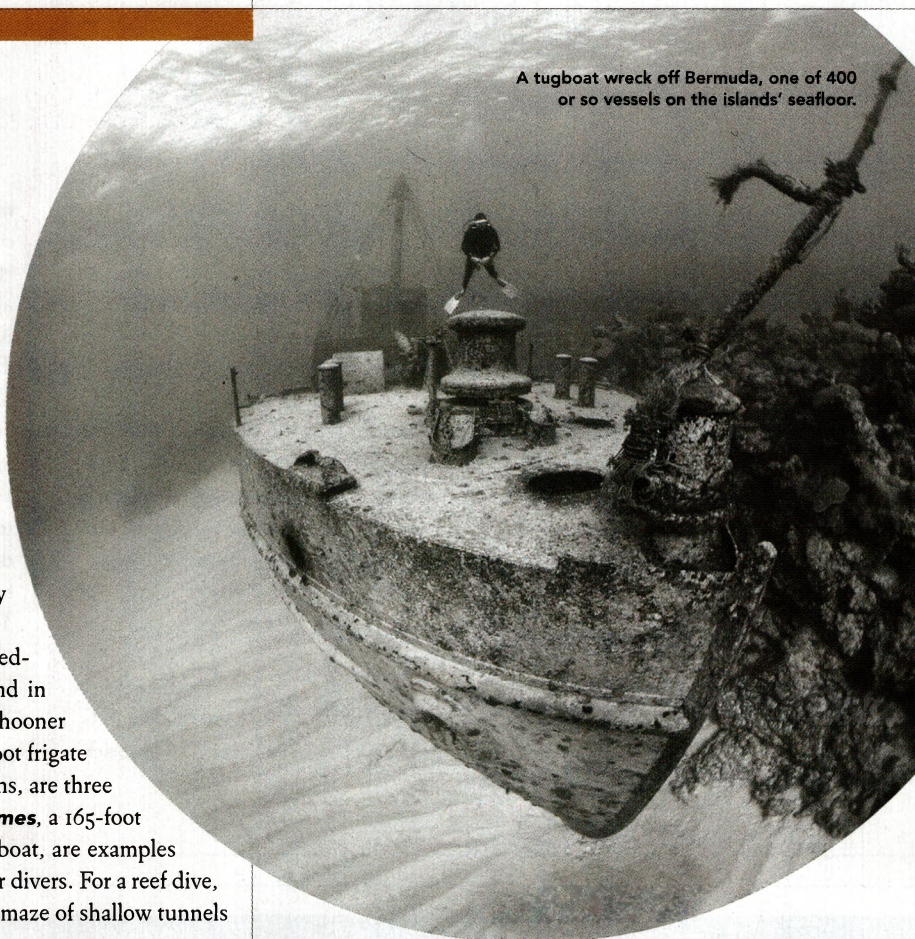
MORE THAN 400 shipwrecks, spanning five centuries of maritime history, surround the island of Bermuda. Most got there by running aground on the island's broad, shallow reef, which happens to be the northernmost coral reef system in the western hemisphere. Together, the wrecks and reefs create a diver's playground with some of the Atlantic's best visibility and dive sites that rarely exceed 60 feet in depth.

Best Dives *Marie Celeste*, a Confederate blockade runner that ran aground in 1864; *Constellation*, a four-masted schooner sunk in 1943, and *L'Herminie*, a 300-foot frigate that sank in 1838 and spilled 60 cannons, are three signature old-school wrecks. *The Hermes*, a 165-foot freighter, and *The King*, a 65-foot tugboat, are examples of modern wrecks sunk intentionally for divers. For a reef dive, you can't beat **Southwest Breakers**, a maze of shallow tunnels filled with silversides.

Weather Bermuda has two seasons: a May-to-November summer (85 degrees during the day; in the 70s at night) and a spring-like winter from December to April (60s to 70s during the day; 50s to 60s at night).

Average Water Temp From 75 to 85 degrees in the summer; dipping to the mid-60s in winter. Dive operators recommend a full 3mm wetsuit for summer; and a full 5mm to 7mm for late fall, winter and early spring.

Average Visibility 70 to 100 feet of vis is normal, with an occasional 150-foot day.



A tugboat wreck off Bermuda, one of 400 or so vessels on the islands' seafloor.

READER COMMENTS

R.H., Lancaster, Pa.: "Bermuda is a gorgeous island with friendly, hard-working people. The diving was great with long, shallow dives and a maximum depth of 65 feet."

G.G., Dover, Del.: "Visibility is great. Weather is wonderful. Very convenient to the eastern United States. A 90-minute flight from Philadelphia."

S.H., Fanwood, N.J.: "The diving was not taxing—50 to 60 feet is considered a deep dive. Wrecks everywhere and every one a new adventure."

Travel Savvy Need to get away? Flight time to Bermuda is about two hours from most East Coast cities. Proof of citizenship and a return ticket are required and while passports are preferred, a birth certificate and valid photo ID will suffice for U.S. and Canadian citizens. Departure tax is usually included in airline ticket price.

Destination Links Bermuda Tourism at (800) BERMUDA or on the web at www.bermudatourism.com. For a complete overview of wreck dives, visit www.divebermuda.com.

Blue Water Divers and Watersports, Ltd.

(888) 434-8323, (441) 234-1034

Web >

www.divebermuda.com **Package >** 3 nights, 2 dives with 2 tanks each, dive gear storage and airport transfers for \$313.50 p.p., dbl. occ., taxes and gratuities included.

Dive Bermuda, Ltd.

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www.bermudascuba.com

Package > Call for specials.

Fantasea Bermuda

(888) DO-A-DIVE, (441) 238-1833 **Web >**

www.fantasea.bm **Package >**

5 days of 2-tank reef and wreck dives for \$380. Mention *Scuba Diving* for a 10 percent discount.



Bonaire

AS THE HOME OF DO-IT-YOURSELF DIVING, Bonaire has become something of a rite of passage among Caribbean divers. The leeward shore is lined with more than 60 prime dive sites, all marked by yellow roadside markers and all just a short kick from shore. Dive resorts make tanks available to you 24/7, so all you have to do is load up the rental truck with your gear and your buddies and park when you feel lucky. Thanks to 20-plus years of protection under the rules of Bonaire's marine park, the reef is one of the healthiest in the Caribbean—regardless of which site you dive, you can't go wrong. You will want to board a dive boat from time to time, however, to dive the sites of Klein Bonaire, a small island just off the leeward shore.

Best Dives Kralendijk's **Town Pier** and **Salt Pier** on the southern coast are two stunning macro dives, their pilings colonized by reef. Bonaire's signature wreck dive, the **Hilma Hooker**, a 236-foot freighter lying on her side in 100 feet of water, is one of the most popular in the Caribbean. Uninhabited and pristine, **Klein Bonaire's** sloping southern walls rank among the healthiest in the region.

Weather Temperatures hover between 75 and 85 degrees depending on the season. Onshore trade winds keep the humidity at bay.

Average Water Temp 80-degree average in summer with winter drops to the mid-70s.



Most Bonaire dive resorts offer boat diving at nearby Klein Bonaire. Here, the dock at Buddy Dive Resort.

Belmar Oceanfront Apartments

(888) 655-0605, (011) 599-717-7878

Web > www.belmar-bonaire.com

Package > 7 nights, 6 boat dives and unlimited shore diving for \$395 p.p., 6-person minimum,

from May 15 to June 5, June 19 to 26, and Aug. 21 to Oct. 2, 2004. Buy one package, get one free.

Black Durgon Inn & Scuba Center of Bonaire

(011) 599-717-5736

Web > [www.black-](http://www.black-durgon.com)

[black-durgon.com](http://www.black-durgon.com) **Package** > 7 nights' accommodations in an oceanside room, diving and breakfast daily for \$390 p.p.; see web site for more information and photos.

Blue Divers

(011) 599-717-6860

Web > [www.blue-](http://www.blue-divers.com)

Average Visibility 60 to 100 feet or greater, depending on currents and plankton.

Travel Savvy Before your first dive, you'll need to get a quick orientation from your dive operator and purchase a \$10 Bonaire Marine Park medallion. No diving on the day you fly is the law in Bonaire, so be aware when booking interisland flights. Departure tax is \$20. A passport or birth certificate with a valid photo ID are required for U.S. and Canadian citizens.

Destination Links

www.infobonaire.com and www.bmp.org.

READER COMMENTS

J.B., Johnson City, Tenn.:

"Lots of action. Eels, turtles, squid, barracuda, lobsters, puffers, jacks—anything you want to see."

R.B., Arlington, Va.:

"The entire island is devoted to diving." **E.B., Kenhorst, Pa.:** "Everyone is environmentally conscious and enthusiastic."

D.B., Oklahoma City, Okla.: "Loved the culture—mix of Dutch and local culture. Great restaurants for such a small island. Diving is only a few minutes from dock and not crowded."

V.B., Lebanon, N.H.: "Excellent shore diving. Excellent reef system. Healthy with great vis."



divers.com **Package** > 7 days' accommodations, diving and a rental car for \$483 p.p., dbl. occ.

Bon Bini Divers Bonaire (011)

599-717-5425 **Web** > www.bonbini-divers.com

Package > 7 nights, 6 days of diving with Bon Bini Divers, 6 boat dives and shore diving, starting from \$459 p.p.,

dbl.occ.; quad occ. is also available, valid May 1 through Dec. 15, 2004, and subject to availability. Cannot be combined with any other offer.

Bonaire Dive & Adventure / Sand Dollar Condominium

Resort (800) 288-4773, (011) 577-717-

2229 **Web** > www.bonairediveandadventure.com

Package > 7 nights, 6 boat dives, unlimited shore diving, breakfast and a vehicle, from \$881 p.p., dbl. occ., room taxes included, valid until Dec. 14, 2004.

Buddy Dive Resort (866) GO-BUDDY, (011) 599-717-5080 **Web** >

www.buddydive.com **Package** > 8 days, 7 nights, 6 days of unlimited shore diving plus 6 boat dives, rental vehicle for 7 days, daily breakfast and airport transfers, starting at \$715 p.p., based on 6-person minimum.

Captain Don's Habitat (800) 327-6709 **Web** > www.habitatbonaire.com

Package > 7 nights, 6 boat dives, unlimited shore diving day or night, airport transfers, daily breakfast, welcome cocktail, rum punch party, and tanks and weights, from \$760 p.p., dbl. occ., \$630 p.p., quad. occ., government taxes, service charges and gratuities included.

Carib Inn (011) 599-717-8819 **Web** >

www.caribinn.com **Package** > Contact for information.

Dive Bonaire/Divi Flamingo Beach Resort & Casino (800) 367-3484, (011) 599-717-8285 **Web** >

www.divoresorts.com **Package** > 7 nights' accommodations, breakfast daily, 6-day rental of a double-cab pickup (including

Bonaire

Dutch Caribbean
Hospitality Without Limits



Belmar Oceanfront Apartments

Intimate and inspirational Belmar offers spacious accommodations, PADI 5-Star dive center, pool, private dock and spectacular views of the Caribbean.

Tel: 1-888-655-0605 / 781-821-5650

Belmar@travelmarketing.com

www.belmar-bonaire.com

2 for 1 Diving
May/June/Aug-Oct
7 nts from
\$546pp/quad

Buddy Dive Resort

Eat, sleep, (buddy) dive. PADI 5-Star oceanfront resort is known for its casual atmosphere, personable staff and charming 1, 2 & 3 Bedroom apts. with Buddy Reef a giant stride away.

Tel: 1-866-GO-BUDDY (462-8339) / 781-821-5650

www.buddydive.com

buddydive@travelmarketing.com

Dive & Drive
7 nts from
\$599pp/six person



Port Bonaire

PADI 5-Star IDC center. 26 stylish 1 and 2+ Bedroom apartments overlook the gardens, pool and ocean!

Tel: 1-800-766-6016 / 781-821-6016

usa@plazavillas.com

www.plazavillas.com

NEW 2004
Dive & Drive
7 nts from
\$529pp/quad



Plaza Resort Bonaire

Bonaire's luxury oceanfront resort that "has it all!" Spacious suites and villas, PADI 5-Star dive center, Aquakids, first class dining & amenities and more on Bonaire's finest beach!

Tel: 1-800-766-6016 / 781-821-6016

usa@plazaresortbonaire.com

www.plazaresortbonaire.com

2 for 1 Diving
May/June/Sept
7 nts from \$652pp/dbl
3D Drive, Dive, Deluxe
7 nts from \$608pp/quad



4

Weekly champagne flights from 12 U.S. Cities



Contact your favorite travel specialist or *Island Express* 1-800-439-0300



A purple tube sponge on the heavily encrusted Hilma Hooker.

STEPHEN FRINK



The tiny longsnout seahorse can be found close to the reef.

insurance, applicable taxes and unlimited mileage), unlimited use of tanks for shore diving, round-trip airport transfers, all tax and service charges, \$899 p.p., dbl. occ. Valid through Nov. 13, 2004.

Dive Inn Bonaire (599) 717-8761 **Web** > www.diveinn-bonaire.com

Package > 6 days' unlimited shore diving day or night, daily maid service and fully equipped kitchenette for \$495 p.p., dbl. occ., service charge and tourist tax included.

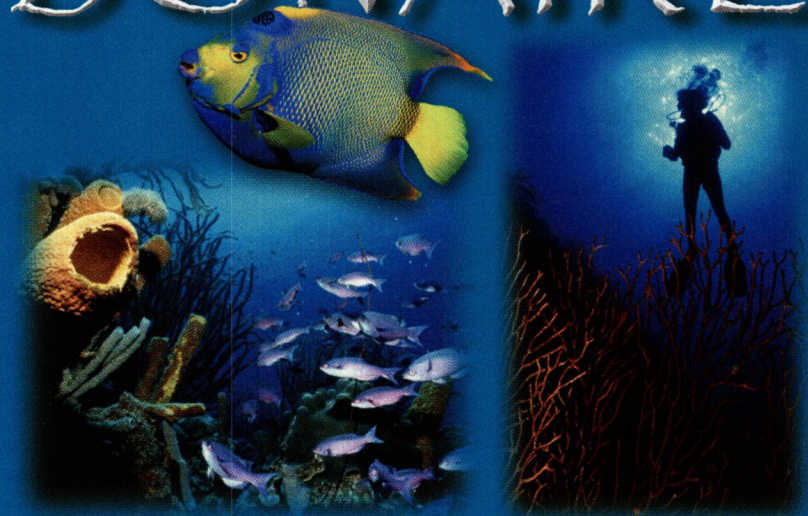
Photo Tours Divers (011) 599-717-3460 **Web** > www.bonphoto-tours.com **Package** > Drive and dive packages include unlimited shore diving or 6 boat dives, and tanks and weights, from \$463 p.p., per week.

Toucan Diving (800) 766-6016, (781) 821-6016 **Web** > www.toucan-diving.com **Package** > Ask about our 6th day of diving free and 2-for-1 diving promotions with participating Bonaire Hospitality Group partners, valid April 16 to Dec. 15, 2003.

Touch the Sea (011) 599-717-8529 **Web** > www.touchthesea.com **Package** > Shore diving with the sole emphasis on learning about marine animals and the reef ecosystem.

wannadive Bonaire (011) 599-790-8880 **Web** > www.wannadive-bonaire.com **Package** > 7 days, 7 nights and 6 days unlimited tanks, from \$293 p.p., dbl. occ., taxes included.

BONAIRE



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SAND DOLLAR CONDOMINIUM RESORT



For a change of scenery; for a change of pace

Ocean-front resort and PADI dive facility offering on-property shore diving on the Caribbean's #1 reef, boat diving, Nitrox, instruction, photo/video services & eco-adventures. Reservations: 1-800-288-4773 • Tel: 954-453-5025 Email: Usreservations@sanddollarbonaire.com **www.sanddollarbonaire.com**

CAPTAIN DON'S HABITAT



The Home of Diving Freedom

with the ease of live-aboard diving and the convenience of resort living 24 hours a day. Dive packages from \$364.00. For reservations call 800-327-6709 Fax: 305-438-4220 Email: rsdhub@maduro.com **www.HabitatDiveResorts.com**

DIVI FLAMINGO BEACH RESORT



Bonaire's Property of the Year

Beachside resort features Divi Dive Bonaire, PADI Gold Palm dive operation, with 24 hour access to tanks, two pools, fitness center, two restaurants, two bars & Bonaire's "Barefoot Casino". Call: 800-801-5550 • Fax: 919-419-2079 Email: dividive@diviresorts.com **www.diviresorts.com**

American Airlines/American Eagle, Air Jamaica, BonairExel and DCA serve Bonaire.



Top Caribbean Dive Destination

www.InfoBonaire.com ■ ■ ■ 1-800-BONAIRE



British Columbia

PODS OF ORCAS, WHITE-SIDED DOLPHINS and sea lions reign supreme in these emerald waters. Marine life is so immense and prolific that it grows in mounds—fish atop shells containing crabs sitting next to barnacles combing the water for food. An incredible array of anemones, urchins and sea stars are everywhere. Walls are so densely blanketed with soft corals that a dive light transforms them into disco-bright carpets of color. But no doubt about it, the water is cold—about 48 degrees at depth in August.

Best Dives The currents here are swift and can change direction in a matter of minutes, so dives are timed to begin at slack tide. **Browning Wall** is a deep, vertical and current-swept site that is covered with orange and red soft corals, giant *Metridium* anemones and nudibranchs. B.C. boasts some of the best wreck diving in North America, including four huge destroyer escorts—the **Chaudiere**, **MacKenzie**, **Columbia** and **Saskatchewan**.

Weather Most diving is done May through October, when air temps drop to the low 50s at night and reach daytime highs in the 70s.

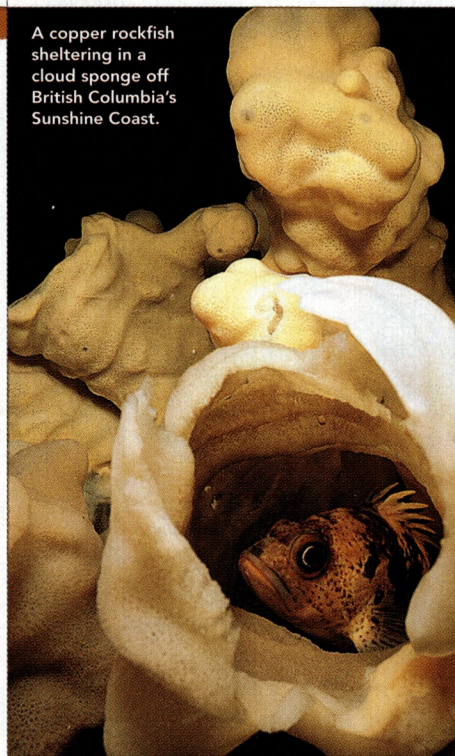
Average Water Temp Summer surface temps can hit 60 degrees, but temperatures in the 40s persist at depths below 30 feet. Winter temps average in the mid-40s.

Average Visibility Visibility ranges from 40 to 120 feet.

Travel Savvy U.S. citizens need proof of citizenship and a photo ID.

Destination Links www.hellobc.com and www.travel.bc.ca.

A copper rockfish sheltering in a cloud sponge off British Columbia's Sunshine Coast.



READER COMMENTS

M.H., Twentynine Palms, Calif.:

"Liked the vis, the huge anemones and wolf eels." *D.R., Mountlake Terrace, Wash.:*

"No bad dive sites. Sponges as big as Volkswagens!"

Abyssal Dive Charters / W.E.

Services (800) 499-2297, (250) 285-2420 **Web** > www.abyssal.com **Package** > 2 boat dives, meals, accommodations, and tanks and weights for CAN\$150 p.p., per day, plus 7 percent tax.

B.C. Dive Adventures & Kayak Adventures

(800) 960-0066, (604) 732-1344 **Web** > www.bcdive.com **Package** > 2-tank boat dive to Howe Sound, aboard the *Adventure II*, and tanks and weights, CAN\$85.

God's Pocket Resort (888) 534-8322, (604) 731-2052 **Web** > www.gods-pocket.com **Package** > 3 to 10 days' accommodations, at least 3 boat dives per day, tanks and weights, food, nonalcoholic beverages, daily maid service, pick up in Port Hardy the night before the 1st day of charter, unlimited shore dives based on your NDL, hot tub, kayaking, whale-watching, for CAN\$222 per diving day, all taxes included. Nitrox and

argon available.

Great Ocean Adventures

(800) 414-2202, (250) 475-2202 **Web** > www.greatoceanadventures.com **Package** > 3 days, 2 nights' accommodations in Victoria, and 2 days of diving including 1 day of shore diving and 1 day of boat diving for CAN\$199.95 p.p., until May 31, 2004.

Lowes Resort

(877) 883-2456, (604) 883-2456 **Web** > www.lowesresort.bc.ca **Package** > 2 nights' accommodations for 5 people in a 2- or 3-bedroom unit with full kitchen and a 2-tank dive with 3 or more divers, 10 max., for CAN\$75 p.p., plus CAN\$25 p.p., per night.

Ocean Explorers Diving, Ltd.

(800) 233-4145, (250) 753-2055 **Web** > www.oceanexplorersdiving.com **Package** > Getaways range from 2 days, 5 dives for CAN\$386 p.p., dbl. occ., plus 7 percent tax, to 4 days, 10 dives, tanks and weights, and transfers included.

Ogden Point Dive Centre

(888)

701-1177, (250) 380-9119 **Web** >

www.divevictoria.com **Package** > 2-day Race Rocks and shipwreck combo.

Includes all rental gear, boat trips, air fills and accommodations, from \$299 p.p.

Rowand's Reef Scuba Shop

(604) 669-3483 **Web** > www.rowands-reef.com **Package** > Free divemaster-led group dives every Saturday at 10 p.m. and every other Wednesday at 6 p.m. See our web page for our multiday trips.

Sunshine Coast Tours

(800) 870-9055, (604) 883-2280 **Web** > www.sunshinecoasttours.bc.ca **Package** > Day trip with 2 tanks, a 6-hour outing, for CAN\$99.



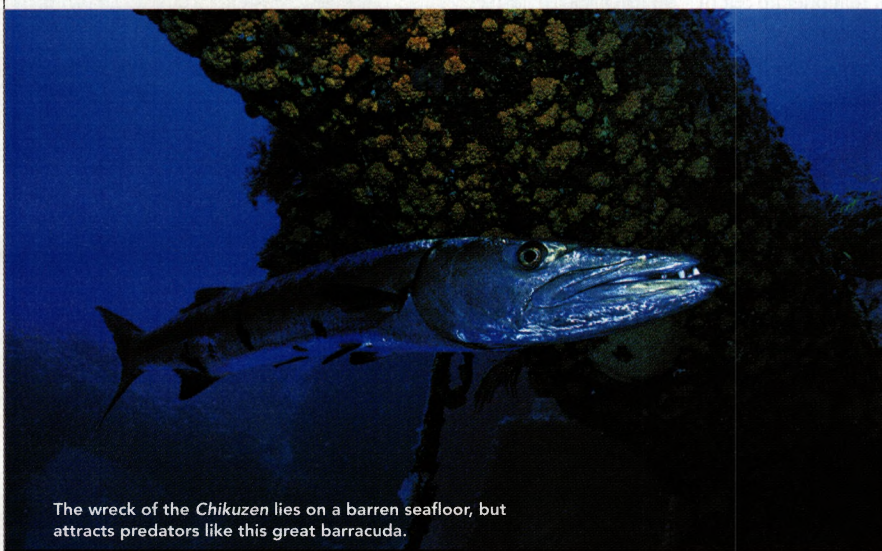


British Virgin Islands

THERE'S NO MORE LAID-BACK AND RELAXING string of islands to dive anywhere in the Caribbean than the British Virgin Islands, or BVIs for short. While physically close to the U.S. Virgin Islands, there's a huge cultural gap. One guidebook writer pronounced the difference between the island groups to be the difference between American verve and British reserve. Bloody well said, mate.

"Nature's Little Secret" is the slogan for the emerald islands that comprise the BVIs, where development has yet to run roughshod over the very traits that make it a popular destination for sailing, scuba and solitude. Only a handful of the islands are inhabited, with most of the diving resorts clustered around the large islands of Tortola and Virgin Gorda. Regardless of which island you stay on, you're never more than a 30-minute boat ride from any dive site.

Best Dives The islands have some of the easiest beginner-friendly diving and snorkeling in the Caribbean. Visitors can dive with land-based operators, from commercial live-a-boards, or rent a bare-boat and set your own course for a week. The wreck of the **R.M.S. Rhone**, located off Salt Island, is a favorite for divers and snorkelers alike. The heavily encrusted and historical wreck is a national park. On the bottom in two distinct pieces for 137 years, the signal cannon, large propeller and portholes



The wreck of the *Chikuzen* lies on a barren seafloor, but attracts predators like this great barracuda.

READER COMMENTS

K.T., Allentown, Pa.: "Lots of dive sites. On many sites, we were the only divers. The dives are easy with a light current. I liked the seclusion of Jost Van Dyke." **K.R., Rye, N.H.:** "We bare-boated, so we liked moving from one dive site to another at our leisure." **T.Q., Louisville, Ky.:** "The views from the top of hills are awesome!"

are still clearly visible. The BVIs are also home to the island of Anegada—and its 10-mile-long **Horseshoe Reef**, which has claimed more than 300 wrecks. Miss tea time if you have to, and make the trip to the mystical boulders of **The Baths**, a world-famous snorkeling beach.

Weather Temperatures range from 80 degrees to 90 degrees in the summer; 75 degrees to 85 degrees in winter.

Average Water Temp Mid-70s in winter, and mid-80s in summer.

Average Visibility 60 to 100 feet.

Travel Savvy Visitors will need a photo ID to enter, though a passport is best.

Destination Links www.bviwelcome.com, www.britishvirginislands.com, www.b-v-i.com and www.bvitouristboard.com.

Cooper Island

Sail Caribbean Divers (284) 495-1675

Web > www.sailcaribbean-divers.com

Package > 7 nights' accommodations, 5 days diving (10 dives total), all scuba and snorkel equipment, kayaking, ferry from Tortola and welcome drink for \$1,099 for divers and \$699 for nondivers, 7 percent government tax and 10 percent service charge included.

Tortola

AquaVenture Scuba Services

(284) 494-4320 **Web** > www.aquaventure-bvi.com

Package > 5 days of 2-tank guided dives plus 1 night dive, snacks, towels, cold bottled water and sodas for \$425.

Dive Tortola (800) 353-3419, (284) 494-9200 **Web** > www.divetortola.com.

Sail Caribbean Divers (284) 495-

1675 **Web** > www.sailcaribbean-divers.com

Package > 15 tanks for \$550.

Virgin Gorda

Dive BVI Limited (800) 848-7078,

(284) 495-5513 **Web** > www.divebvi.com

Package > 8 days, 7 nights, 5 dives with 2 tanks each at Leverick Bay, \$834 p.p.





Cancun and Riviera Maya

BETTER KNOWN FOR TOPSIDE attractions like the annual spring break bacchanalia and ancient Mayan ruins, Cancun and the 75-mile stretch of Caribbean coastline known as the Riviera Maya have some great diving, too. The shallow, nearshore reefs of Cancun, Isla Mujeres and Playa Del Carmen are great for beginners, but you can also explore the world-famous cenotes, freshwater springs that flow beneath the limestone bedrock of the Yucatan jungle. Farther south and offshore, the Chinchorro Banks atoll is a pristine aquatic wilderness.

Best Dives The world's most extensive system of freshwater cenotes offers divers a chance to explore a fascinating ecosystem. The shallow offshore reefs of **Playa Del Carmen, Cancun** and **Isla Mujeres** are popular with beginners, and farther south, **Chinchorro Bank**, a great oval of coral 100 miles south of Cozumel, is pristine and largely unexplored. Reef diving is often land-based and is offered by dive shops that operate out of resorts and coastal cities. The numerous cenotes are often reached by a van ride into the jungle, where you may have to haul your gear a short distance to the cenote entrance.

Weather Pleasant weather year-round, from 85 degrees in the summer to 75 degrees in the winter.

Average Water Temp Mid-80s during summer and mid-70s during winter.

Average Visibility Vis is near 100 feet on deeper sites, less on shallow reefs, and more than 100 feet in the cenotes.

Travel Savvy Either a valid passport or the combination of a birth certificate and driver's license is required. Departure tax is usually included in airline ticket price.

Destination Links www.mayanriviera.com.

READER COMMENTS

J.G., Olney, Md.: "Liked sightseeing Mayan ruins in nearby Tulum, access to both cenotes and coral reefs." **L.H., Union City, N.J.:** "Playa del Carmen has great weather, breezes, reefs, nightlife." **A.H., Vancouver, Wash.:** "Great vis, little current. Turtles, dolphins, big eels, lobsters, beautiful coral! Amazing vis." **B.H., Ridgefield Park, N.J.:** "Lots of eco-tours. Great rates. Lots of bang for your buck." **B.H., Ridgefield Park, NJ:** "Cheap, close, great diving, great people, incredible beaches." **E.K., Needham Heights, Mass.:** "Cenote diving is awesome, thrilling and indescribably beautiful!"

Beneath the jungle floor, Akumal's cenotes offer divers an otherworldly experience.



Akumal Dive Adventures

(877) 425-8625, (505) 992-3333 **Web** > www.akumaldiveadventures.com

Package > 4 nights' hotel accommodations near the dive shop, six dives, \$265 p.p.

Dressel Divers (011) 34-96-356-1496 **Web** >

www.dresseldivers.com **Package** > Get 15 percent discount when dive services are prepaid. For more information, e-mail pablovalls@dresseldivers.com.

Hidden Worlds

Cenotes Park (011) 984-87-78535 **Web** > www.hiddenworlds.com.mx **Package**

> 2-tank dive at Dreamgate Cenote, includes tanks, weights and guide, \$100 p.p.

Maya Ha Resort (877) 443-1600, (512) 443-2977 **Web**

> www.mayaharesort.com **Package** > 2004 packages

include lodging, 3 meals daily and 5 days of diving, \$1,045 p.p., dbl. occ.

Sealife Divers (011) 52-984-80-32866 **Web** >

www.sealifedivers.com **Package** > 4 nights' hotel accommodations, 4 breakfasts, 3 days diving (4 ocean dives and 2 cenote dives), from \$299 p.p., dbl. occ.; 7 nights' hotel accommodations, 7 breakfasts, 4 days' diving (4 ocean dives and 4 cenote dives), from \$464 p.p., dbl. occ. Add 12 percent local tax.

Tank-Ha Dive Center & Hotel (011) 52-984-87-30302 **Web** > www.tankha.com **Package**

> 5 days, 4 nights' accommodation and breakfast package, including 2 days' ocean diving (4 tanks), 1 day cenote (cavern) diving (2 tanks), round-trip airport transfers, from \$310 p.p., dbl. occ.



Cayman Islands

THIS TRIO OF Caribbean islands has been serving divers with consistent, high-quality scuba diving for so long that the very name—Cayman—is virtually synonymous with great diving. You can always count on three things from the Cayman Islands—good visibility, great walls, and outstanding resorts and dive operators.

Beyond that, there are also intriguing animal encounters like Stingray City and Sandbar, awesome wrecks like the *Balboa*, *Capt. Keith Tibbetts* and *Oro Verde*, and enough photo opportunities to keep divers coming back year after year. Family-oriented divers and those who enjoy nightlife will flock to Grand Cayman, while those who prefer quieter, remoter getaways should beat feet to the Sister Islands—Little Cayman or Cayman Brac—or even Grand Cayman's East End.

Best Dives Grand Cayman is ringed by more than 150 dive sites, but the most popular has to be **Stingray City**, where you can hand-feed southern stingrays. Cayman Brac is known for spur-and-groove reefs and offers sheer drop-offs with a variety of vertical swim-throughs, but also boasts the enormous Russian warship, the *MV Capt. Keith Tibbetts*. Little Cayman's claim to fame is **Bloody Bay Wall**, which starts in water as shallow as 18 feet and drops off so steeply that you'll feel like you're free-falling.

Weather Mild year-round, the temperatures are in the 70s in winter and mid- to high 80s in summer.

Average Water Temp Not much variance for these islands, with water temperatures ranging from 77 degrees in the winter to about 82 degrees in the summer.

Average Visibility About 100 feet year-round, though it can increase in the summer to 200 feet and fall in the winter to around 75 feet.

Travel Savvy The Cayman dollar is fixed at a rate of CI\$1 to US\$1.25. U.S. dollars and credit cards are widely accepted. A passport or birth certificate with a valid photo ID are required for U.S. and Canadian citizens. Departure tax is usually included in airline ticket price.

Destination Links www.caymanislands.ky, www.divecayman.ky, www.cayman.com.ky and www.destination.ky.



Stingrays and Grand Cayman are practically synonymous.

READER COMMENTS

LITTLE CAYMAN/CAYMAN

BRAC S.B., New York, N.Y.:

"Love the diving and the easy lifestyle." P.B., Carpinteria, Calif.:

"I loved everything about Little Cayman. The diving can't be beat." J.B., Huntington Beach, Calif.: "I like walls and relaxed atmosphere." L.C., Yakima, Wash.:

"There was something for the novice as well as experienced diver! Water was 82 degrees even 90 feet down! Something new on every dive." GRAND CAYMAN

G.C., Richmond, Va.: "What's not to like? The island is laid-back and beautiful. The diving is superb, and the weather is perfect." P.B., Marco Island, Fla.: "A beautiful place. Can't wait to go back!"

C.C., Reston, Va.: "Lots of great swim-throughs, plentiful wildlife."

A.D., Shoreview, Minn.: "It's a friendly, relaxing, diving-oriented island with a wide variety of dive sites. Can get crowded with cruise passengers." A.D., Austin, Texas:

"I like the number and accessibility of dive sites." J.F., Soquel, Calif.: "We had a fabulous time! Everything was just perfect. Night diving was exceptional!"

Cayman Brac

Brac Caribbean & Carib Sands

(866) 843-2722, Web > www.866the-brac.com Package > 7 nights at Brac Caribbean Beach Village or Carib Sands Beach Resort, 6 days of diving, breakfast and transfers for \$777 p.p., dbl. occ., taxes included.

Divi Tiara Beach Resort / Divi

Dive (800) 661-3483, (345) 948-1553

Web > www.diviresorts.com Package > 7 nights' standard accommodations, 7 full breakfasts, 7 dinners, 2-tank morning boat dive daily, unlimited shore diving, tanks, weights, round-trip airport/hotel transfers, welcome cocktail, all tax and service

charges, from \$939 p.p., dbl. occ. Valid until Dec. 21, 2004.

Reef Divers at the Brac Reef Beach Resort

(800) 594-0843, (727) 369-2507 Web > www.bracreef.com Package > 7 nights' deluxe beach-view accommodations, 17 boat dives, 3 meals daily and land transfers for \$1,449 p.p.,



dbl. occ., hotel taxes and service charges included, valid through Dec. 12, 2004.

Little Cayman

Conch Club Divers at the Conch Club Condominiums (800) 327-3835, (727) 323-8727 **Web** >

www.conchclub.com **Package** > 2-bedroom townhomes start at \$264 per night and 3 bedrooms for \$352 per night, valid for new bookings only. Meals can be added for an additional cost. Certain restrictions and blackout dates apply. Subject to availability. Pay for 6 nights and stay for 7, and dive with Conch Club Divers at special rates. Valid through July 15, 2004.

Paradise Divers (877) 3-CAYMAN, (345) 948-0001 **Web** > www.paradisevilas.com **Package** > 7 nights' oceanfront villa accommodations, 6 days' diving at Bloody Bay and Jackson's Bay for \$1,125 p.p., dbl. occ.

Reef Divers at the Little Cayman Beach Resort (800) 327-3835, (727) 323-8727 **Web** > www.littlecayman.com **Package** > 7 nights' pool-view accommodations, 17 boat dives, breakfast, lunch and dinner daily, and land transfers for \$1,495 p.p., dbl. occ., hotel taxes and service charges included, valid through Dec. 18, 2004. Certain restrictions and blackout dates apply. Subject to availability. New bookings only.

Pirates Point Resort (345) 948-1010 **Web** > www.piratespointresort.com **Package** > Weeklong stay, 2 computer profiles, dives daily that last 1 hour or more, 3 meals daily, homemade breads and desserts, wine with dinner, bar, pool, beach chairs, beach towels, robes in rooms and bicycles for \$1,395 p.p., plus 15 percent service charge and a room tax of \$8 a night per room, if booked direct. Valid through Dec. 15, 2004.

Sam McCoy's Diving Lodge (800) 626-0496, (345) 948-0026 **Web** > www.mccoyslodge.com.ky **Package** > 7

nights, 6 days of 2-tank morning boat dives, unlimited afternoon shore diving and optional night diving, 3 meals daily and transfers. Summer rate is \$1,211.50 p.p., dbl. occ., taxes included.

Southern Cross Club (800) 899-2582, (619) 563-0017 **Web** > www.southerncrossclub.com **Package** > 7-night, 2-tank dive package includes everything but the bar, \$1,900 p.p., dbl. occ.

Grand Cayman

Bob Soto's Reef Divers Headquarters (Scuba Sensations)

(888) 698-7400, (345) 949-2022 **Web** > www.bobsotosreefdivers.com, www.caymanmadness.ky **Package** > Cayman Madness 2004: 7 nights, 4 boat dives, 2 tanks each, 1 night boat dive, unlimited shore diving, airfare, underwater treasure hunt, meet-the-gang party, beach luau, rum

punch steel drum, Caribbean night with local dishes, barbecue and prizes from \$1,149 p.p., dbl. occ.

Cayman Diving Lodge - East End (800) TLC-DIVE, (345) 947-7555

Web > www.divelodge.com **Package** > 7 nights' ocean-view accommodations, 3 boat dives per day (except on arrival and departure days), and all meals and transfers for \$1,669 p.p., dbl. occ., through June 2004, or \$1,515 from July to November 2004, taxes included.

Cayman Marine Lab (345) 916-0849 **Web** > www.caymanmarinelab.com **Package** > 1-tank eco-related dive and 1 night dive, \$60.

Divetech (866) 622-9626, (345) 946-5658 **Web** > www.divetech.com, www.cobaltcoast.com **Package** > Daily 2-tank boat trips to the North Wall, unlimited shore diving, packages for any number



Off Cayman Brac, healthy reefs start shallow before dropping into the depths.

of nights in garden or ocean suites and your choice of breakfast only or a full meal plan.

Don Foster's Dive Cayman (800) 83-DIVER, (345) 945-5132 **Web** >

www.donfosters.com **Package** > 2 boat dives, 2 tanks each, unlimited shore diving, tanks and weights, transfers and a Don Foster's crew T-shirt, from \$120.

Eden Rock Diving Center (345) 949-7243 **Web** > www.edenrockdive.com **Package** > 7 days' accommodations, 6 days of boat and shore diving for \$899.80 p.p., dbl. occ.

Fisheye of Cayman (800) 887-8569, (345) 945-4209 **Web** > www.fisheye.com.

Jeffsresorts.com (715) 686-2232 **Web** > www.jeffsresorts.com **Package** > Private home, sail, snorkel and seafood lunch trip to Stingray City from \$995 per week through Dec. 15, 2004.

Ocean Frontiers at Compass Point and The Reef Resort (888) 232-0541, (345) 947-7500 **Web** > www.ocean-frontiers.com **Package** > 3, 5 or 7 nights' accommodations, diving, Avis car rental, from \$420 p.p., dbl. occ., taxes included, valid through Dec. 18, 2004. Airfare available with Cayman Airways.

Peter Milburn's Dive Cayman, Ltd. (345) 945-5770 **Web** > www.petermilburndivecayman.com **Package** > \$75 for a 2-tank dive.

Red Sail Sports Grand Cayman (877) RED-SAIL, (345) 945-5965 **Web** > www.redsailcayman.com **Package** > 3 days of diving with a 2-tank morning dive and afternoon boat dive daily, sunset sail, 50 percent off night dive, issue of *Fathoms* magazine, 10 percent retailer's discount, Red Sail Sports T-shirt and ground transfers within the Seven Mile Beach area for diving, from \$285 p.p. Packages including accommodations are also available. Extra 1-tank dive available, but must be booked on the island. Stingray City dive is not included in

the package. All dive or hotel/dive packages must be pre-purchased and prepaid.

Seasports (345) 949-3965 **Web** > www.bestdivinggrandcayman.com **Package** > Dive instruction and guided dives available. Please contact for rates.

Seaview Hotel and Dive Resort (866) 945-0558, (345) 945-0558 **Web** > www.seaviewdivers.com **Package** > Accommodations, 2-tank boat dives daily, trips to Stingray City every week, unlimited shore diving day or night, and on-site pool bar and Naked Fish restaurant, from \$312 p.p., hotel taxes included. Meal packages are available.

Sunset House (888) 281-3826, (345) 949-7111 **Web** > www.sunsethouse.com/rsd.htm **Package** > 5 nights in a courtyard room, 4 morning 2-tank dives, unlimited

shore diving, 3 meals a day from My Bar or Seaharvest restaurants, Caribbean buffet and barbecue night, ground transfers and all tax and service charges for \$1,016.50 p.p., dbl. occ.

Tortuga Divers, Ltd. (877) RED-SAIL, (345) 947-2097 **Web** > www.tortugadivers.com **Package** > 3 morning 2-tank dives, afternoon reef dive, extra tank, sunset sail, Tortuga Divers T-shirt, 50 percent off night dive, and tanks and weights for \$285. 5-, 6- and 7-day packages are available. Visit www.redsailcayman.com for accommodations package.

Wall to Wall Diving (345) 945-6608 **Web** > www.walltowalldiving.com **Package** > 3 dives, 2 tanks each, \$210; 4 dives, 2 tanks each, \$270; 5 dives, 2 tanks each, \$325; 6 dives, 2 tanks each, \$375.

CAYMAN

8 days, 7 nights • 6 days, 2 tank boat & unlim. shore dives • One Little Cayman trip • bkfst. daily. R/T transfer. 4/19-12/21/04 \$679 pp dbl occ Divi Tiara Beach Resort The intimate Divi Tiara Beach Resort is world renowned for its unlimited diving options! Dive Bloody Bay Wall, or a Russian Destroyer, and the largest underwater mountain range in the western hemisphere! A comfortable and relaxed resort with a great restaurant and brand new beach bar. Rejuvenate, dive, feast, relax—Tiara style....	8 days, 7 nights • 17 boat dives • 3 meals daily • R/T transfer. 5/1-12/18/04 \$1495 pp dbl occ Little Cayman Beach Resort Little Cayman Beach Resort's service and room amenities are outstanding. Home to Reef Divers and known as having the Best Wall Diving, Fish Life, Visibility, Healthiest Marine Environment, Dive Operation Resort, Destination...that's a lot of Bests.
8 days, 7 nights • 6 days, 2 tank boat dives • Continental bkfst. daily • R/T transfer. 1/1-12/15/04 \$777 pp dbl occ Carib Sands Known as one of the world's top dive destinations, Cayman Brac and Little Cayman are a dream come true for divers. Experience the breathtaking walls and fabulous reefs while relaxing at Carib Sands Beach Resort on Cayman Brac. The dive operation, Reef Divers, will cater to your diving needs and the Captain's Table Restaurant will offer you some of the finest dining on the island.	8 days, 7 nights • 6 days, 2 tank boat dives • R/T transfer. 4/17-12/19/04 \$1217 pp dbl occ Grand Cayman Marriott Resort Enter the Grand Cayman Marriott Resort and be transported into a lush paradise including a free flowing waterfall in a lagoon setting. Located on world famous Seven Mile Beach, the resort's guest rooms are the most spacious on the island. The resort features excellent dive programs with Red Sail Sports and a great location within walking distance of many restaurants.

Cayman Islands Department of Tourism and Cayman Airways

CAYMAN ISLANDS

Grand Cayman • Cayman Brac • Little Cayman

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USA & Canada: 800/328-2288



Costa Rica

LOOKING FOR A DESTINATION with as much adventure above water as below? Check out Costa Rica. Where else can you dive with hammerhead sharks, chase giant manta rays, climb an active volcano, swim beneath a rain forest waterfall and surf a remote beach all in one trip? The best diving is found on the Pacific Coast, where divers are frequently amazed by the abundance of fish, sharks and rays.

Best Dives Located 375 miles off the Pacific Coast, **Cocos Island** is one of the last wild places left on earth. Live-aboard cruises here start with a 36-hour crossing in rough seas, but the payoff is swimming with schooling hammerhead sharks and other big animals. For land-based divers, Costa Rica's Pacific Coast offers two options—the beach resorts on the **Gulf of Papagayo** in the north and the rustic jungle lodges of the **Osa Peninsula** in the south.

Weather Mild year-round, with temperatures rarely exceeding 90 degrees in summer or dipping below 75 degrees in winter.

Average Water Temp High 70s to low 80s in summer; low 70s in winter.

Average Visibility Expect 30 to 60 feet with occasional peaks of 80 feet.

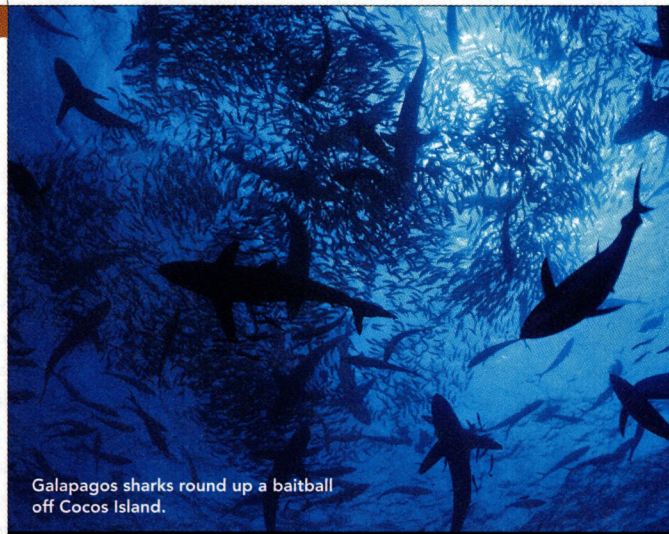
Travel Savvy A valid passport is required. Departure tax is \$26.

Destination Links www.tourism-costarica.com and www.infocostarica.com.

READER COMMENTS

COCOS ISLAND *R.C., Redondo Beach, Calif.:* "Simply amazing advanced diving. Anything could happen on any dive." *D.I., Devon, Pa.:* "Occasionally powerful currents. Hammerheads, whale sharks, rays." *K.K., Miramar, Fla.:* "I liked everything about it—the diving, the island and the adventure of getting there." *P.W., Warne, N.C.:* "More sharks per gallon than any other place in the world."

PACIFIC COAST *R.B., Bella Vista, Ark.:* "I liked the frequency of close manta ray encounters. Great encrusted rock structures. Gear variety and quantity of fish." *L.C., Arlington, Wash.:* "Locals are extremely friendly and helpful. Diving was great, as were many topside activities." *P.F., Simpsonville, Ky.:* "Remote, but great adventure." *F.W., Hanover, N.H.:* "This was my third trip to Cocos. I go back because I think Cocos is the most exciting place to dive—lots of big stuff and lots of action. We got near a large baitball with snappers, sharks and dolphins all around it."



Galapagos sharks round up a baitball off Cocos Island.

Guanacaste

Aquacenter Diving

(800) 276-7501, (011) 506-352-4031 **Web** > www.aquacenterdiving.com **Package** > 4 nights, 3 days of daily 2-tank boat dives to Catalina Islands, 1 afternoon 2-tank dive, use of kayaks and breakfasts, \$409 p.p., dbl. occ., hotel taxes included.

Gulf of Papagayo

Diving Safaris de Costa Rica

(877) 853-0538, (011) 506-672-0012 **Web** > www.costaricadiving.net **Package** > 8 days, 7 nights, 4 days' diving, afternoon horseback riding, river rafting, treetop canopy tour, breakfast, lunches and dinner daily for \$965 to \$1,350 for divers, \$695 to \$1,090 for nondivers, p.p., dbl. occ. Prices based on the season and size of group.

Ocotal Resort (011) 506-670-0321, ext. 152 **Web** > www.ocotaldiving.com **Package** > 7 days, 3 days of diving, canopy tour, horseback riding, whitewater rafting, 1 night at Arenal Area Hotel, visit to Tabacon Hot Springs

at the base of Arenal Volcano and breakfast daily for \$1,155 p.p., dbl. occ.

Resort Divers de Costa Rica

(011) 506-670-0421 **Web** > resortdivers-cr.com **Package** > 7 nights in the all-inclusive 5-star Fiesta Premier Resort & Spa, 4 days of 2-tank dives, meals, beverages, snacks, dinner shows, kayaks, tennis courts and casino, from \$907 p.p., dbl. occ.

Rich Coast Diving Co.

(800) 4-DIVING, (011) 506-670-0176 **Web** > www.richcoastdiving.com **Package** > 7 nights, 5 days' diving, daily breakfast, tanks and weights, guide, and snacks on board, from \$499 p.p., dbl. occ., all taxes included.

Osa Peninsula & Manuel Antonio

Costa Rica Adventure Divers

(800) 317-0333, (303) 838-0969 **Web** > www.costaricadiving.com **Package** > 3-tank dive and lunch at Caño Island for \$125. 2-tank dive off Manuel Antonio, \$75.



Cozumel

DIVE COZUMEL ONCE AND YOU'LL dive it for life. Effortless drift diving on world-class reefs is just that addictive. Add bargain prices, easy access from the U.S. and a unique blend of topside fun that includes great restaurants, noisy honky-tonks and authentic Sunday night fiestas in the town square, and you have just a few of the reasons legions of divers return year after year after year.

Best Dives Diving is along the leeward southwest shore of the island. There are at least 60 dive operators in Cozumel. Twice a day, an armada of dive boats takes divers for two-tank excursions to reefs on the southern end of the western coast. Some operators also offer one-tank afternoon dives, usually on a shallow reef, that depart about 3 p.m. Ideal for beginners or for the second dive on a two-tank trip are the nearshore reefs like **Yucab**, which is so colorful it stands out like a fruit and vegetable stand in the middle of summer. Sites that line the drop-off include **Santa Rosa Wall**, where the sponges are prolific, including elephant ears bigger than Dumbo's. Advanced? Head to **Punta Sur**. A trip through **Devil's Throat**, the central tunnel through this popular reef, is a rite of passage for all Cozumel divers.

Weather Cozumel's average temperature year-round is a balmy 80 degrees, though humidity and bright sunlight can turn up the heat index considerably.

Average Water Temp Water temperatures vary from 75 degrees in winter to 85 degrees in summer.

Average Visibility 100 feet of visibility year-round.

Travel Savvy You'll need proof of citizenship, so bring a passport or the combination of your birth certificate and driver's license. Keep the paper tourist card they give you when you clear immigration—you'll need to give it back when you leave Mexico.

Destination Links www.isla-cozumel.com.mx, www.cozumelon-line.com, www.cozumel.net, www.cozguide.net and www.travelnotes.cc.



The splendid toadfish, rarely spotted elsewhere in the Caribbean, is a native of Cozumel's reefs.

READER COMMENTS

C.B., Mexico, N.Y.: "Most fun on vacation I have ever had. Loved the abundance of marine life." **C.B., Wesson, Miss.:** "I liked the drift diving and the diversity of smaller marine life. Great value." **D.B., Del-egan, N.Y.:** "Lots of coral and marine life in shallow waters." **L.B., Plano, Texas:** "Loved drift diving. Lots of sea life." **G.C., Naples, Fla.:** "The dining options were fantastic. Fish were abundant, visibility was 100-feet-plus." **B.C., Atlanta, Ga.:** "The world's best diving for the money." **G.D., Katy, Texas:** "Liked the drift diving, pinnacles, swim-throughs, walls and diversity of marine life." **T.H., Holly, Mich.:** "I liked the warm water, warm people, great food, diverse marine life and reasonable prices." **B.H., St. Mary's, Pa.:** "Great dive sites, easy access, clear visibility, great coral, plentiful fish." **H.K., Pittsburgh, Pa.:** "Great diving for the money." **C.P., Denison, Iowa:** "I really don't think there's anything to dislike except when it's time to go home." **A.S., Clifton Park, N.Y.:** "So much to do above and below water. Everyone of every age can enjoy it."

Aldora Divers / Villa Aldora

(011) 52-987-87-23397 **Web** > www.aldo-ra.com **Package** > 2-tank dives, from \$89. Villa and dive packages available.

Aqua Safari (011) 52-987-87-20101

Web > www.aquasafari.com **Package** > 7 nights at Safari Inn, 5 days' diving, \$432 p.p., dbl. occ., tax included, valid until December 2004.

Black Shark Dive Shop (011) 52-

987-87-25657 **Web** > www.blackshark.net **Package** > 2-tank dive, \$55.

Blue Bubble Divers (866) 405-5749,

(011) 52-987-87-21865 **Web** > www.blue-bubble.com **Package** > 6 trips of 2-tank dives, \$330 p.p., including all gear (BC, regulator, wetsuit, fins, mask, weights and tanks), fresh bottled water, fruits and snacks

on board, dry towels and divemaster.

Blue XT Sea Diving (011) 52-987-

86-92409 **Web** >

www.bluxtseadiving.com **Package** > 3 days of 2-tank packages with night dive, \$240; marine park fee not included. Hotel and dive packages available.

Cozumel Equalizer (011) 52-987-87-

84370 **Web** > www.cozumelequaliz-

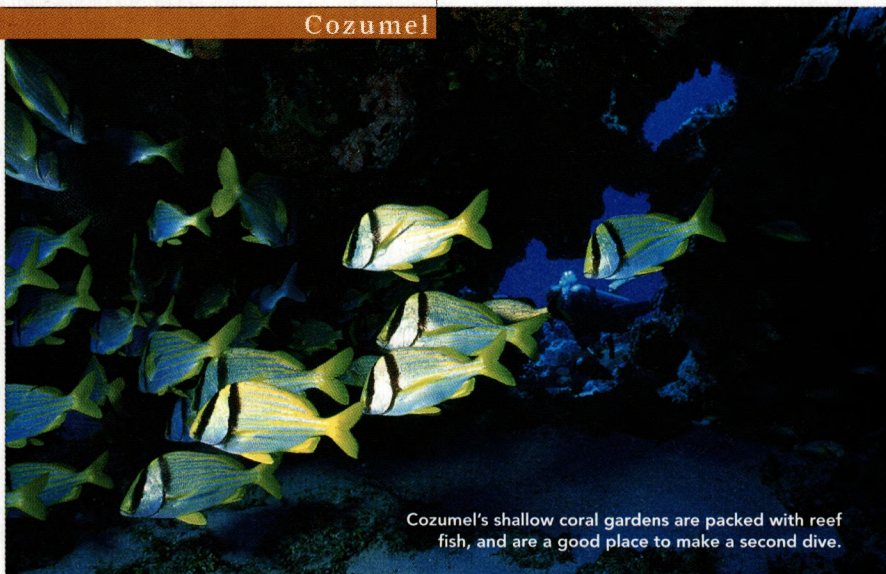


ers.com **Package** > 3 nights at Plaza Las Glorias in ocean-view junior suite, 2 dive trips (includes one shore dive with gear), \$277 p.p., dbl. occ., valid from June 11 to Aug. 19, 2004. Many other packages available.

Cozumel Sports (011) 52-987-87-26726 **Web** > www.cozumelsports.com

Package > Hotel and dive packages starting from \$60 per day, based on dbl. occ., including 2-tank dives per day, taxes and marine park fees. Discounts available when you mention *Rodale's Scuba Diving* magazine: Scuba lessons, 20 percent off, gear included; underwater video and underwater photography contracts, 20 percent off. All offers expire Dec. 31, 2004.

Del Mar Aquatics / Dive Palancar (011) 52-987-87-25949 **Web** >



Cozumel's shallow coral gardens are packed with reef fish, and are a good place to make a second dive.

www.delmaraquatics.net **Package** > Individual and group packages available at Casa del Mar.

DIMI Scubatours (011) 52-987-87-22915 **Web** > www.dimiscubatours.com

Package > 7-day package includes 10

dives, accommodations with pool, continental breakfast, lunch and beverage, \$380 p.p., dbl. occ.

Dive House Cozumel (011) 52-987-87-21953 **Web** >

www.divehouse.com.

STEPHEN FRINK



Cozumel ★ Mexico



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Dive Paradise Cozumel (800)

308-5125, (011) 52-987-87-21007

Web > www.diveparadise.com

Package > Wide variety of accommodations and dive packages available in all price ranges starting from \$298. All-inclusive option and children's program available at our newest beach location, Cozumel Resort Hotel.

Dive With Martin / Diving Adventures (800) 897-5553

Web > www.divewithmartin.com

Package > 2-tank boat dive, \$50 when diving 3 or more days, including free rental gear.

Diving Adventures (888) 338-

0388, (011) 987-87-23009 **Web** >

www.divingadventures.net **Package**

> 7 nights in downtown beautiful bungalows, 5 days of 2-tank diving a day, unlimited beach diving, \$415 p.p., dbl. occ.

Dressel Divers (011) 34-

963561496 **Web** > www.dresseldivers.com

Package > 15 percent discount when prepaying dive services. For more information, e-mail pablovalls@dresseldivers.com.

Eagle Ray Divers (011) 52-987-

87-25735 **Web** > www.eagleraydivers.com

Package > 3 days, 6 tanks, \$178.

Hotel Flamingo & Dive

Center (800) 806-1601, (954) 351-

9236 **Web** >

www.hotelflamingo.com **Package** >

This spring and summer, book a 6-night, 4-day dive package for \$499 p.p., dbl. occ., including accommodations in courtyard air-conditioned room, 4 days of 2-tank diving, full breakfast each morning, buffet lunch on dive days, transfers to pier, and discount coupon book for drinks, rental and all taxes.

King Divers / Diving Adventures (800) 897-5553 **Web** >



2004

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www.elcid.com, www.divewithmartin.com

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elcidcozumel@diving-adventures.com



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www.casadelmarcozumel.com

011-52-987-872-1900

reservations@casadelmarcozumel.com



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5 nights/3 days diving - 8 tanks! \$589 • 7 nights/5 days diving - 14 tanks! \$870

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sales@caradonna.com

www.caradonna.com



www.cozumelkingdiver.com **Package** > 2-tank dive, \$65, including basic rental gear.

Living Underwater (859) 356-5647

Web > www.living-underwater.com

Package > 2-tank dives, morning, twilight or night, \$80.

Papa Hogs Scuba Emporium

(877) 389-3629, (011) 52-987-87-21651

Web > www.papahogs.com **Package** >

7 nights' accommodations, taxes, breakfast daily, 5 days of 2-tank dives on 6-passenger fast boats, complimentary shore dive on arrival, \$459 p.p., dbl. occ.

Sand Dollar Sports (888) 737-6399, (011) 52-987-87-26157 **Web** > www.sanddollarsports.com **Package** >

5 days of diving, including night dive, \$300; 6 days of diving, including night dive, \$330.

Scuba Club Cozumel (800) 847-

5708, (011) 52-987-87-21133 **Web** >

www.scubaclubcozumel.com **Package** >

7-night dive package includes accommodations, 3 meals per day, 5 days of boat diving, unlimited beach diving, \$795 p.p., dbl. occ.

Scuba Du (011) 52-987-87-29505

Web > www.scubadu.com **Package** > 5

nights at Hotel Presidente Intercontinental, 4 days of 2-tank boat diving, \$990 p.p., single occ.; \$615 p.p., dbl. occ., and \$580 p.p., triple occ. Package includes accommodations in standard room, daily buffet breakfast, 2-tank diving, unlimited shore diving, guide, tanks, weights, belt, bottled water and fresh seasonal fruit on board, welcome drink upon arrival and 25 percent discount on night dives. Rinse and storage facility for equipment at dive shop. Valid from April 27 to Nov. 23, and Dec. 1-25, 2004. Add 12 percent tax, 7.5

percent resort fee and \$10 service charge per night.

Sea Scuba (888) 338-0387, (011) 52-987-87-25744 **Web** > www.cozumel.diving.net/seascuba/ **Package** > 7 divers

max. on fast boat, \$295 per diver for 12 one-tank boat dives, long bottom time (60 minutes or longer for each dive); \$160 for 7 tanks (4 divers min.). Marine park fee not included.

Yucatech Expeditions (011) 52-

987-87-25659 **Web** > www.yucatech.net

Package > Recreational diver cavern tour for maximum of 4 divers, includes tanks, air fills, cenote fees, lunch, ground and ferry transportation, guide service, 2 dives in the same or different locations, weights if necessary, first-class ground transportation with air-conditioning, \$135 per diver.



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Curaçao

LIKE ITS NEIGHBOR BONAIRE to the east, Curaçao offers the freedom of shore diving, where you simply pull the rental car over, suit up and wade in. Like Aruba to the west, Curaçao has a couple of great wreck dives, and offers a well-developed tourism infrastructure, including good hotels, restaurants, casinos and shopping. Generally speaking, the better shore diving is in the north and the better boat diving is in the south. The island's shore sites are marked with numbered white stones, similar to Bonaire's yellow ones.

Best Dives **Mushroom Forest** is a surreal field of mountainous star coral heads that have been eroded at their bases, making them look like enormous shiitakes. Arguably the most pristine site, **Klein Curaçao** is a dramatic (and rare) wall dive an hour south of the main island that boasts snappers, turtles and tons of tropicals. **The Superior Producer** is Curaçao's biggest and best wreck, sitting in 50 to 110 feet of water and festooned with orange cup corals and the full spectrum of encrusting sponges.

Weather Summer temps average 85 degrees and drop to about 75 degrees in winter.

Average Water Temp Low to mid-80s in summer, mid- to high 70s in winter.

Average Visibility Ranges from 50 to 100 feet.

Travel Savvy A passport or birth certificate with a valid photo ID are required for U.S. and Canadian citizens. Departure tax is \$22.

Destination Links www.curaçao-tourism.com.

READER COMMENTS

D.B., Brighton, Mass.: "Good access to shore diving, macro-level sea life, great weather and beaches." **C.B., Phoenix, Ariz.:** "Loved it! Total diving freedom 24/7." **B.C., Alexander City, Ala.:** "Sloping walls, good coral, easy access to dive sites, good vis." **P.K., Pass Christian, Miss.:** "Great shore diving. Healthy reefs. Lots of fish life." **S.K., Galitzin, Pa.:** "Very easy diving. Lots of fish and small critters." **L.K., Knoxville, Tenn.:** "Shore diving allows diving at your own pace." **C.S., Astoria, N.Y.:** "Liked short boat rides."

Atlantis Diving (011) 5999-465-8288 **Web** > www.atlantisdiving.com
Package > 7 days' diving, 2-tank shore dives each day including pick-up service, divemaster and beach entrance fees for \$295 p.p.

Habitat Curaçao (800) 327-6709
Web > www.habitatcuracao.com **Package** > 7 nights, 6 boat dives, 24-hour unlimited shore diving, tanks and weights, daily breakfast, welcome cocktail and rum punch party, from \$673 p.p., dbl. occ.; \$498 p.p., quad. occ.

Ocean Encounters (011) 5999-461-8131 **Web** > www.oceanencounters.com **Package** > 4 days of 2-tank boat dives for \$248.

Silent Immersion (011) 5999-767-7014 **Web** > www.silentimmersion.com.


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Dominican Republic

COLUMBUS IS CREDITED with discovering the island of Hispaniola, home to the country we know as the Dominican Republic, but it's American divers who are leading a new era of exploration in the DR. Lured by easy access and bargain prices at some sweet all-inclusive resorts, U.S. divers are increasingly exploring the second largest island in the Caribbean. Almost anywhere you dive in the DR, you can expect shallow- to medium-depth reefs and wreck dives. The best water conditions are found off Boca Chica, Juan Dolio, Bayahibe, the Samaná Peninsula and Playa Dorada/Sosua.

Best Dives Boca Chica: Two great wrecks lie almost side by side in just 60 feet of water—the **Hickory** is a 140-foot salvage vessel, and **El Limon**, a 75-foot-long tugboat, **Juan Dolio:** Try the **Tanya V**, a 120-foot cargo ship sunk off the Coral Costa Caribe Resort. **Bayahibe: Catalina Wall**, from the coral plateau at 15 feet to the depths of the wall at 130, may be the best dive in the entire DR. **Samaná:** Pinnacle dives don't get prettier than **The Tower**, a 130-foot-deep coral skyscraper.

Weather Summer temps range from 89 to 95 degrees with winter temps ranging from 75 degrees to 85. August is the hottest month and January the coolest.

Average Water Temp 84 degrees in summer to 77 degrees in winter.

Average Visibility Expect 60 to 75 feet on sites near shore, with vis improving the farther you travel offshore.

Travel Savvy For U.S. citizens, a valid passport or original birth certificate and picture ID, like a driver's license, are required. The departure tax is \$10. The official language is Spanish, but English is widely spoken in the resorts and tourist areas. The dive staff is very likely to be multilingual thanks to the heavy European visitation.

Destination Links www.dominicana.com.do.

READER COMMENTS

R.B., Sewell, N.J.: "Liked short rides to dive sites by boat and calm waters." **J.C., Minneapolis, Minn.:** "Liked the great value for the money." **D.G., Paxton, Mass.:** "Mostly easy diving." **V.S., Red Bank, N.J.:** "I've been coming here for years. Great locals, economical, party atmosphere. Significantly cleaned up in the past few years." **T.B., McHenry, Ill.:** "Beach areas very nice."

Generally approachable, porkfish are common on Dominican Republic reefs.



Canoa Coral by Hilton / Sea Pro Divers (800)

661-3483, (305) 451-1130

Web > www.waterhouse-tours.com

Package > 7 nights, 6 days of 24-hour, all-inclusive accommodations, 2 dives per day for 5 days, including tanks and weights. Canoa Coral by Hilton features 4 restaurants, 4 bars, massive swimming pool, internet room, nightly entertainment, horseback riding, kids' club, all located along the calm leeward Caribbean coast. \$850 p.p., dbl. occ.

Costa Caribe Coral by Hilton / Sea Pro Divers (800)

661-3483, (305) 451-1130 **Web** > www.waterhouse-tours.com

Dressel Divers Web

www.dresseldivers.com **Package** > 15 percent discount for all prepaid diving. For more

information, e-mail pablo-valls@dresseldivers.com.

Hamaca Coral by Hilton / Sea Pro Divers (800)

288-1332, (305) 451-0242 **Web** > www.waterhousetours.com

Scubacaribe (809) 552-1435 Web

> www.scubacaribe.com

Package > One dive in Punta Cana, two dives in Catalina and two dives in Bayahibe. Catalina day excursion, 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., Bayahibe day excursion, 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., night dives to Bayahibe.

Sea Pro Divers - Playa Dorada, Boca Chica, Juan Dolio, Bayahibe and Bavaro (809)

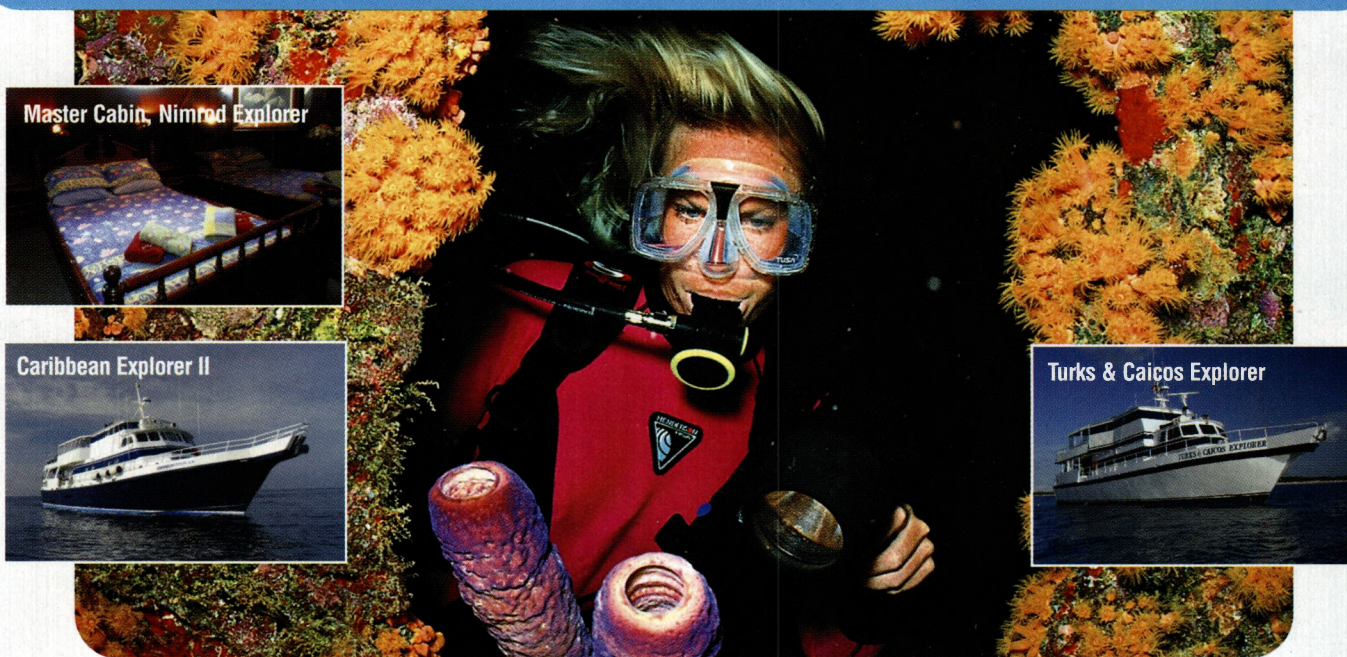
320-2607 **Web** > www.pope-report.com/SeaProDivers

Treasure Divers (800)

820-1631, (809) 523-5320 **Web** > www.treasuredivers.de

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2004 EXPLORER VENTURES GET OUT & DIVE MORE SWEEPSTAKES!

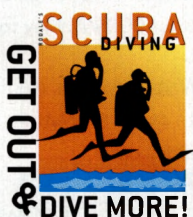


Choose your adventure! If you're our Grand Prize winner, you will enjoy a luxury live-aboard dive vacation for two on the Explorer Ventures Vessel of your choice:

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2. Nimrod Explorer
Go down under for the dive trip of a lifetime aboard the M/V Nimrod Explorer. Visit Australia's most pristine dive sites on the Far Northern Great Barrier Reef (inaccessible to any land-based operators), the memorable Coral Sea and more!

3. Turks & Caicos Explorer
Join the M/V Turks & Caicos Explorer on a trip through turquoise waters containing over 1,000 square miles of living coral reef. Take in the expansive underwater visibility, high-voltage wall dives, and all the marine life the Turks & Caicos Islands have to offer.



Voted among the Best Worldwide Live-Aboards 7 years running!

All entrants will be eligible to win the following grand prize: A live-aboard dive vacation for two (2) aboard your choice of one of the following: 1) M/V Caribbean Explorer II (7-day cruise to Saba, St. Kitts, St. Maarten – Northeastern Caribbean. Retail Value \$2,990), 2) M/V Nimrod Explorer (5-day cruise to Northern Great Barrier Reef, Coral Sea, Cairns/Cooktown – Queensland, Australia. Retail value \$4,790) or 3) M/V Turks & Caicos Explorer (7-day cruise to Providenciales – Turks & Caicos, B.W.I. Retail value \$2,790). Prize package includes two double occupancy berths in one stateroom, diving, all meals and beverages aboard, and all port and immigration fees. Not included are: airfare to the vessel's port, transfers to/from the vessel, optional tours, any incidental on-board expenses, crew gratuities, marine park fees, Friday night dinner (Caribbean), or applicable departure taxes. Reservations must be made directly with Explorer Ventures Ltd. and are subject to space availability. Travel must be completed by May 31, 2005. Approximate retail value of prize is \$2,790 to \$4,790 depending on prize trip selected. See attached card for complete rules.

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Eastern Caribbean

ALTHOUGH SOME OF THE ISLANDS in the Eastern Caribbean are better known in sailing and beach-going circles than in the dive community, all can deliver a week of excitement-filled recreational diving, whether your love is macro photography, shore diving or drift diving.

Best Dives Most diving on Dominica takes place off the island's southwestern corner between **Roseau** and **Scotts Head**, the lip of a sunken volcano. Grenada's **Bianca C** is one of the largest wreck dives in the Caribbean, while the 365-foot **Stavronikita** on Barbados is one of the most impressive. **St. Lucia's** diving is focused on shore diving shallow reefs and drift diving deep walls within the island's marine park. In addition to some nice sloping walls, **St. Vincent** has its fair share of rare critters. **Saba**, the world's first self-sustaining marine park, is basically one big open-ocean pinnacle with blacktip, whitetip and bull sharks, spotted eagle rays and hammerheads.

Weather Temperatures vary between 70 degrees and 90 degrees.

Average Water Temp Water temperatures range from 77 degrees in winter to 83 degrees in summer.

Average Visibility Visibility varies from 25 to 150 feet.

Travel Savvy A passport or birth certificate and valid photo ID are required. Departure taxes range from \$12 to \$22.

Destination Links Dominica at www.dominica.dm, Grenada at www.grenadagrenadines.com, Saba at www.sabatourism.com, St. Lucia at www.stlucia.org and St. Vincent and the Grenadines at www.svg-tourism.com or www.scubasvg.com.

READER COMMENTS

BARBADOS J.B., Monument, Colo.: "Very friendly people. The diving is a good value." **DOMINICA**

W.H., Charlotte, N.C.: "Diving is great. Whale-watching is a must." **SABA T.G.,**

Wilmington, Ill.: "I like the quiet and peacefulness and the very friendly locals." **ST. EUSTATIUS M.G., Harris-**

burg, Pa.: "Lots of marine life and healthy corals with good visibility." **ST. MAARTEN J.C., Mid-**

lothian, Va.: "Decent visibility and reasonable prices." **ST. KITTS & NEVIS**

B.R., Las Vegas, Nev.: "Beautiful. Healthy reefs." **ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES**

J.S., Leitchfield, Ky.: "The sites are packed with small creatures."

Barbados

Dive Barbados (246) 422-3133

Web > www.divebarbados.net **Package** > Book diving with us and get a discounted 3-course dinner at Carambola restaurant for BDS\$65, May to October 2004.

Hightide Watersports (800) 513-5763, (246) 432-0931 **Web** > www.divehightide.com.

The Dive Shop Barbados (888) 898-3483, (246) 426-9947 **Web** > www.divebds.com **Package** > 7 nights, 8 days, 5 days of unlimited day diving, tanks, air, weights, belts,

guide, airport transfers in Barbados, \$539 p.p., dbl. occ.

Dominica

Dive Dominica / Castle

Comfort Lodge (888) 414-

7626, (767) 448-2188 Web >

www.castlecomfortdivelodge.com

Package > \$699 per diver, dbl. occ.; \$499 per nondiver, dbl. occ.; and \$950 per diver, single occ. Includes 7 nights' accommodations, 7 breakfasts, 10 dives, unlimited shore diving, airport transfers, welcome punch, taxes, gratuities and use of kayaks. Valid May to October 2004, except September.

Nature Island Dive (767) 449-8181 Web > www.natureisland-dive.com. **Package >** Packages are described on the web site.

Saba

Saba Divers / Scout's

Place Hotel (866) 656-SABA

(7222), (011) 599-41-62740 Web >

www.sabadivers.com **Package >** 5

nights, 8 dives, includes taxes, transfers to boat, tanks, weights, boat trips and breakfasts, \$475 p.p.

Sea Saba Dive Center (011)

599-416-2246 Web > www.seasa-

ba.com **Package >** 5 nights at Juliana's Hotel in ocean-view room, 3 days of diving (6 dives), daily breakfast at Tropics Cafe, transfers, tanks, weights, hotel room tax and service charge, \$583.

St. Eustatius

Dive Statia (866) 614-3491, (011)

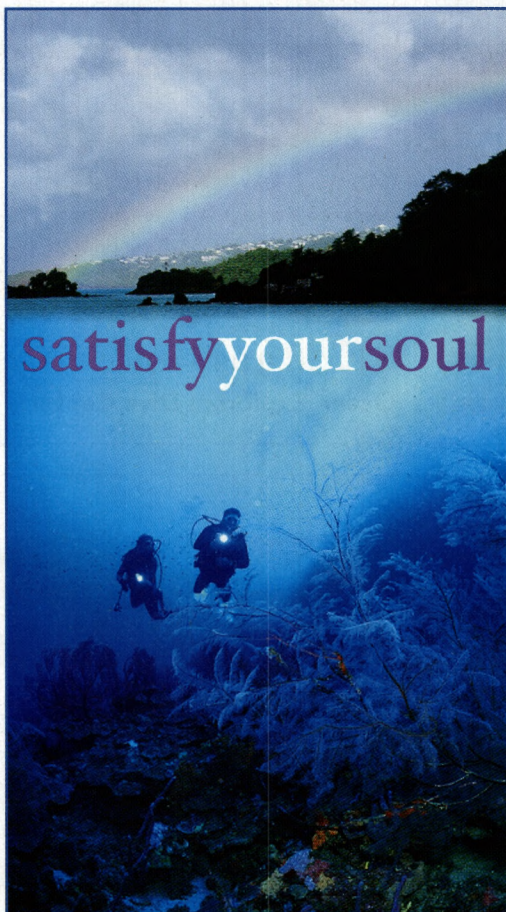
599-318-2435 Web > www.divesta-

tia.com **Package >** 7 nights, 10 boat dives, full breakfast, hotel tax and service charges, refrigerator in room, airport transfers, \$535-\$610.

Golden Rock Dive Center

(800) 311-6658, (011) 599-318-2964

Web > www.goldenrockdive.com



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Diving...

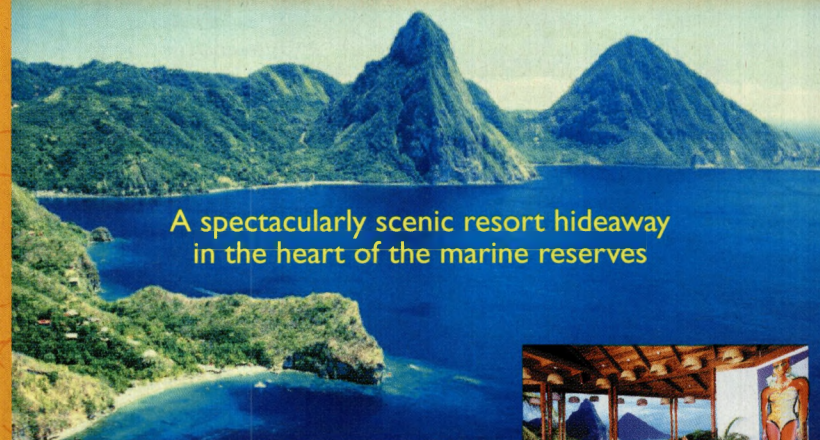
The tropical seas that surround St. Vincent & the Grenadines offer a world of marine adventure. Whether you're skimming on the surface on a windsurfer or sunfishing or gliding below through shoals of fish and colourful corals, this is one of the Caribbean's most beautiful marine environments. Swim, dive or snorkel...*satisfy your soul*



St. Vincent & the Grenadines

St. Vincent & the Grenadines Ministry of Tourism, Kingstown, St. Vincent & The Grenadines, West Indies. Tel: (784) 457-1502 email: tourism@caribsurf.com
UK: Tel 44 0207-937-6570 email: svgtourism-europe@aol.com USA: Tel: 1 800 729-1726 email: svgtony@aol.com CANADA: Tel (416) 398-4277 www.svgtourism.com

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Package > 7 nights at The Old Gin House, breakfasts, 10 boat dives, tanks, weights, airport transfers, \$692 p.p., dbl. occ. until Dec. 15, 2004. Some restrictions apply.

St. Kitts & Nevis

Dive St. Kitts Scuba (800) 621-1270,

(847) 699-7570 **Web** > www.caribbeans.com **Package** > 5 two-tank boat dives, full equipment, \$325 per diver. 7 nights at Bird Rock Beach Hotel, \$350 p.p., dbl. occ., plus tax and service charges.

St. Maarten

Ocean Explorers Dive Center

(011) 599-544-5252 **Web** > www.stmaartendiving.com **Package** > 10 dives, including tanks and weights, \$340 p.p.
Divi Little Bay Beach Resort
 (800) 661-3483 **Web** > www.diviresorts.com **Package** > 7 nights' accommodations in beachfront room, breakfast daily, round-trip airport transfers, welcome cocktail reception, 3 dives, tax and service charges, from \$852 p.p., dbl. occ., until Dec. 21, 2004.

Montserrat

Sea Wolf Diving School (664) 491-6859 **Web** > www.seawolfdiving-school.com **Package** > 10% off for every five dives booked.

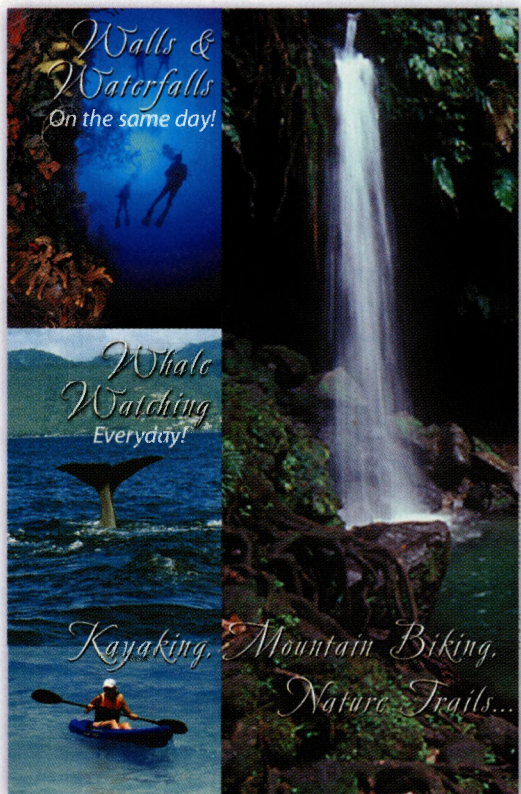
St. Vincent & The Grenadines

Bequia Dive Adventures (784) 458-3826 **Web** > www.BequiaDiveAdventures.com **Package** > 9 nights at the Village Apartments, 12 full-service boat dives, from \$534 p.p., quad. occ.
Dive Bequia (877) 685-0944, (784) 458-3504 **Web** > www.dive-bequia.com **Package** > 9 nights at Village Apartments, tax, 12 boat dives, \$530 p.p., dbl. occ. Valid May 1 to Oct. 31, 2004.

Dive Fantasea (784) 457-5560 **Web** > www.divefantasea.com **Package** > 10-dive package, \$375, with equipment.
Dive St. Vincent (800) 544-7361, (784) 457-4928 **Web** > www.divestvincent.com **Package** > 7 nights' accommodations, 12 dives, all equipment including computers, full breakfast daily, airport transfer, waterfront, 17 percent government tax and hotel service charge, \$850 p.p., dbl. occ.

Friendship Divers (784) 455-3036 **Web** > www.friendshipdivers.com **Package** > 7 nights at Island Inn, 10 dives, from \$759 p.p.

Petit Byahaut (784) 457-7008 **Web** > petitbyahaut.com **Package** > 5 nights' accommodations, all meals, snorkeling, diving, nature trails, \$1,350 p.p., dbl. occ.



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www.fortyounghotel.com

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Soft corals adorn an overhang in the waters off Fiji's Lau Group.

Fiji

FIJI HAS LONG BEEN KNOWN AS the "soft coral capital of the world." But there's much more to the underwater story here. From salt cays to volcanic atolls, the nutrient-rich waters of the fringing reefs and lagoons support tremendous biodiversity and plenty of hard corals. Take your pick from among 320-plus South Seas islands surrounding Fiji's main trio of Vanua Levu, Viti Levu and Dakavu. Divers rave about the quality of the reefs, but the experience differs depending on which island you dive. Remember to imbibe a little kava, a ceremonial drink offered in friendship to visitors.

Best Dives When diving in Fiji, expect an astounding amount of marine life including more than 400 species of invertebrates and incredible visibility. Somosomo Strait's **Great White Wall** offers the best opportunity for a lush soft coral wall dive. Spectacular offshore dive sites between Viti Levu and Vanua Levu like **Magic Mountain** and **E-6** are serviced by live-aboards and are favorites of underwater photographers. Diving through the currents of channels like **Nigali Passage** and **North Save-a-Tack Passage** can bring the rewards of schooling fish and pelagic predators.

Weather Temperatures stay in the low 80s most of the year and dip to about 75 degrees from May to October. The best conditions are found from March to December when the weather is cooler and drier than it is in January and February.

Average Water Temp Anywhere from the mid-70s in cool months (May to October) to the mid-80s in January and February.

Average Visibility Excellent—in the triple digits most of the year, although plankton blooms and rainfall can lower the vis during the rainy season from December through March.

Travel Savvy You'll need a passport and a return ticket to get into Fiji, plus there's a departure tax of FJ\$20 when you leave.

Destination Links www.fijifvb.gov.fj and www.bulafiji.com.

Bega Island and Pacific Harbor

Bega Divers Fiji (011)

679-3361088 Web >

www.beqadivers.com **Package** > 7 nights in private villa-type accommodations in small, intimate resort located in Pacific Harbour, including 5 days' diving, picnic lunch, Nadi/Pacific Harbour/Nadi transfers, \$590 per diver.

Marlin Bay Resort (800)

542-3454, (949) 646-8091

Web > www.marlinbay.com

Package > 7-night dive package, includes airfare from Los Angeles, 3 gourmet meals per day, airport transfers, 5 days of 2-tank boat diving and Fiji government tax, \$2,399.

Kadavu

Dive Kadavu Resort

(011) 679-3311780 Web >

www.divekadavu.com **Package** > 5 nights, 6 days'

accommodations in private bungalow, all meals, 6 dives, airport transfers on Kadavu and taxes, \$905 per diver, \$650 per nondiver. 7 nights, 8 days' accommodations in private bungalow, all meals, 10 dives, airport transfers on Kadavu and taxes, \$1,240 per

READER COMMENTS

N.W., White Haven, Pa.: "Fiji is amazing—the people are incredibly friendly and outgoing." **K.F., Orangevale, Calif.:** "Remote, pristine and beautiful." **D.S., Peyton, Colo.:** "Tremendous variety of marine life in huge quantities. I saw sharks, blue ribbon eels, leaffish, sea kraits, stonefish and awesome soft corals." **J.B., Phoenix, Ariz.:** "Visibility was greater than 100 feet. Coral was incredible." **C.P., Layton, Utah:** "This was my third trip to Fiji and I keep going back because of the people."



diver, \$840 per nondiver.

Kadavu Lailai

Subsurface Fiji / Bounty Island Eco Sanctuary (011) 679-6666738 **Web** > www.fijidiving.com **Package** > Unlimited dives priced at FJ\$640, including rental gear.

Lau Group

Kaimbu Island Resort (800) 473-0332, (011) 679-8880333 **Web** > www.kaimbu.com.

Lautoka

SubsurfaceFiji / Beachcomber Island Resort (011) 679-6666738 **Web** > www.fijidiving.com **Package** > Unlimited dive package, FJ\$640, valid until March 31, 2005. Dormitory accommodations, FJ\$78 per night, including all meals. **Subsurface Fiji / Treasure Island Resort** (011) 679-6666738 **Web** > www.fijidiving.com **Package** > Unlimited dives, FJ\$640.

Malolo

Subsurface Fiji / Malolo Island Resort (011) 679-6666738 **Web** > www.fijidiving.com **Package** > Unlimited dives, FJ\$640.

Matangi

Matangi Dive (Tropical Dive) (011) 679-8880776 (866) FIJI-DIVE, **Web** >

www.matangi-dive.com **Package** > 7 nights in oceanfront bure at Matangi Island Resort, including all meals, snacks and most resort activities, 4 dive days and interisland air on Sunair, from \$1,799 p.p., twin share.

Musket Cove Island

Subsurface Fiji / Musket Cove Resort (011) 679-6666738 **Web** > www.fijidiving.com **Package** > Unlimited dives, FJ\$640.

Namenalala

Moody's Namena (011) 679-8813764 **Web** > www.moodyznamenafiji.com **Package** > All-inclusive accommodations in oceanfront wood and bamboo bure, \$210 p.p., twin share, per day, including meals, snacks, some activities and 12.5 percent tax. Diving is extra. Valid May 1, 2004, to March 1, 2005.

Nanau-i-ra

Ra Divers Fiji (011) 679-6694511 **Web** >

www.radivers.com **Package** > 7 nights' accommodations, all transfers, meals, 5 days of diving, weights, belts, tanks and dive guide. Accommodations range from full resort facilities to self-contained beach cottages. Rates depend on type of accommodations.

Navini

Subsurface Fiji / Navini Island Resort (011) 679-6666738 **Web** > www.fijidiving.com **Package** > Unlimited dives, FJ\$640.

Qamea

Qamea Resort & Spa (866) 867-2632, **Web** > www.qamea.com **Package** > 7 nights in beachfront bure at Qamea Resort & Spa, all gourmet meals, 5 days of 2-tank diving plus unlimited shore diving, \$2,200 p.p., dbl. occ. Resort activities available.

Taveuni

Aqua-Trek Taveuni / Garden Island Resort (800) 541-4334, (415) 398-8990 **Web** > www.aquatrek.com **Package** > 7-night package includes round-trip airfare Los Angeles/Nadi, Fiji, round-trip airfare Nadi/Taveuni, accommodations, diving, meals and transfers, \$2,450 p.p., dbl. occ.

Vanua Levu

Eco Divers - Tours (011) 679-8850122 **Web** > www.ecodiver-tours.com **Package** > 7 nights, 5 dive

days, standard room with fan, meals, diving, return domestic air transfers and ground transfers, \$1,090 p.p., dbl. occ., until Dec. 31, 2004. Located in Savusavu, at Koro Sun Resort and Hannibals Resort.

Jean-Michel Cousteau Fiji Islands Resort (800) 246-3454, (415) 788-5794

Web > www.fijiresort.com **Package** > 7-night, 8-day package includes accommodations in a garden-view bure, breakfast, lunch and dinner daily, 5 days of 2-tank dives, \$2,135 p.p., dbl. occ., plus 12.5 percent tax. Single supplement and nondiver rates.

Viti Levu

AquaBlue Fiji (011) 679-6726111 **Web** > www.aquabluefiji.com **Package** > 5 nights' budget accommodations, 3 dive days of 2-tank diving, refreshments and towels, from FJ\$399 p.p., based on twin or dbl. share. 5 nights' budget accommodations, full Learn to Dive course, from FJ\$450 p.p., based on twin or dbl. share. 2 tanks, including refreshments and towels, FJ\$135 p.p. **Waidroka Bay Dive Resort** (011) 679-3304605 **Web** > www.dive-surf-fiji.com.fj **Package** > 7-night deluxe oceanfront bure, meals and 8 dives, \$575 p.p., dbl. occ.

Yasawa

Yasawa Island Resort (011) 679-6722266 **Web** > www.yasawa.com **Package** > 3 days of 2-tank diving, \$270.

Florida Keys

BEFORE IT ENDS IN KEY WEST, the Overseas Highway meanders some 112 miles across 200 islands on its southwest stretch from Key Largo, past dozens of dive shops. Drive-to coral reefs may be common in other tropical destinations, but here in the lower 48, the Keys are the only option. For beginners and advanced divers, wreck divers and lobster hunters alike, the Florida Keys remain the U.S.'s most popular dive destination.

Best Dives Take your pick for wreck diving in the Keys: the **Adolphus Busch Sr., Duane, Bibb, Eagle, Thunderbolt, Cannabis Cruiser** and **Cayman Salvor**. Not to be missed is the 510-foot-long **Spiegel Grove**, the largest ship ever to be sunk as an artificial reef. The best reef diving is found in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary at sites like **Alligator Reef, Conch Reef, Davis Reef** and **Molasses Reef**, and in Pennekamp State Park, home of the popular **Christ of the Abyss** statue. The **Looe Key National Marine Sanctuary** offers good snorkeling and shallow reef diving.

Weather Temperatures are mild year-round with hot, humid summers and mid-winter temperatures bottoming out in the 50s and 60s.

Average Water Temp Low 80s to high 70s in summer. Low 70s in winter.

Average Visibility Typically averages 40 to 75 feet, with 100 feet on calm days, but wind and waves can reduce visibility dramatically.

Destination Links www.fla-keys.com.

READER COMMENTS

ISLAMORADA/TAVERNIER A.A., Danville, Ky.: "Liked the wreck of the *Spiegel Grove*, big fish, reef sharks." **KEY LARGO T.T., Edmond, Ohio**: "Great sea life, wrecks, easy access." **M.R., Maryland Heights, Mo.**: "Lots of bottom time on 25-foot reefs." **KEY WEST J.L., Sanford, Mich.**: "I liked that you could find cheap lodgings or expensive homes for rent. Do-it-yourself reef tours. No guides needed." **MARATHON P.S., Plano, Texas**: "Laid-back atmosphere is very nice. Good food, very fresh seafood." **BIG PINE KEY K.S., Wynnewood, Pa.**: "Love the ease of diving and the laid-back atmosphere." **LOOE KEY H.B., Matawan, N.J.**: "Easy diving. Lots of marine life. Easy to navigate."

Big Pine Key

Looe Key Reef Resort

(800) 942-5397, (305) 872-4244

Web > www.diveflakeys.com

Package > Buy 3 trips and get the 4th free, \$125 p.p., equipment included.

Paradise Divers, Inc.

(800) 852-0348, (305) 872-

1114 **Web** > www.paradivers.com

Package > Dive instruction and certification for

1 day with 3 dives and an introductory dive for \$250 p.p.

Seahorse Scuba (305)

872-1362 **Web** > www.seahorsescuba.net

Package > 2- and 3-tank dive safaris from \$60 to \$75 p.p., per day, 6 divers max., only 1 trip per day allowed.

Underseas, Inc. (800)

446-5663, (305) 872-2700

Web > www.flkeysdiving.com

Package > 2-tank reef dive, \$50, including tanks and weights.

Islamorada & Tavernier

Bud n' Mary's Dive

Center (800) 344-7532,

(305) 664-2211 **Web** >

www.keydives.com

Package > Multidive package saves 10 percent, weights included.

Conch Republic Divers

(800) 274-3483, (305) 852-

1655 **Web** > www.conchrepublicdivers.com.

Florida Keys Dive

Center (800) 433-8946,

(305) 852-4599 **Web** >

www.floridakeysdivectr.com

Package > \$89 p.p., dbl. occ., for diving and lodging.

Holiday Isle Dive Shop

(800) 327-7070, (305) 664-

3483 ext. 644, **Web** >

www.diveholidayisle.com

Package > 2 dives for \$45.

Rainbow Reef Dive

Center (800) 457-4354,

(305) 664-4600 **Web** >

www.rainbowreef.us

Package > Accommodations, 2-tank dive, tanks and weights, breakfast and refreshments from \$69 p.p., per day.

Tavernier Dive Center

(800) 787-9797, (305) 852-4007

Web > www.tavernierdivecenter.com

Package > 1 dive trip and 1 night's accommodations for \$99 p.p., dbl. occ.

Key Largo

Admiral Dive Center

(800) 346-3483, (305) 451-

1114 **Web** > www.admiral-center.com

Package >

Oceanfront accommodations from \$50 per night.

Amy Slate's Amora

Dive Resort (800) 426-

6729, (305) 451-3595 **Web** >

www.amoray.com

Package > 4 dive trips with 2 tanks each, including tanks and weights, \$180 p.p.

Aqua-Nut Divers (800)

226-0415, (305) 451-1622

Web > www.aqua-nuts.com



Schoolmasters pack the bow of the wreck of the Benwood off Key Largo.



Package > 3 nights', 8 dives and breakfast for \$285 p.p., dbl. occ., excluding holidays. Prices increase on weekends.

Captain Slate's Atlantis Dive Center

(800) 331-3483, (305) 451-3020 **Web** > www.captain-slate.com **Package** > 7 days' accommodations, 1 dive per day with 2 tanks, tanks and weights, from \$850.

HMS Minnow Dive Charters

(800) 366-9301, (305) 451-7834 **Web** > www.hmsminnow.com **Package** > 2-tank dive trips, \$50 p.p.

Horizon Divers

(800) 984-3483, (305) 453-3535 **Web** > www.horizondivers.com **Package** > Purchase 5 trips and receive a 20 percent discount off the regular rate of \$300.

It's A Dive Water-sports

(800) 809-9881, (305) 453-9881 **Web** > www.itsa-dive.com **Package** > 5 reef trips for \$225 p.p., including tanks and weights.

Jules' Undersea

Lodge (305) 451-2353 **Web** > www.jul.com **Package** >

Accommodations, breakfast, dinner and dive gear, from \$295 p.p.

Ocean Divers

(800) 451-1113, (305) 451-1113 **Web** > oceansdivers.com **Package** > 2-tank, 2-location shallow reef dive, \$65.

Quiescence Diving Services

(305) 451-2440 **Web** > www.quiescence.com **Package** > 2-tank, 2-location trips, tanks and weights, \$64 (subject to change).

Sea Dwellers Dive Center of Key Largo

(800) 451-3640, (305) 451-3640 **Web** > www.sea-dwellers.com **Package** > 3 days, 3 nights in a standard room, 2-location dive trip daily, tanks, weights, breakfast daily, \$282 p.p., dbl. occ.

Silent World Dive Center

(800) 966-3483, (305) 451-3252 **Web** > www.silentworldkeylargo.com

Package > 4 nights' accommodations and 5 days of diving for \$280 p.p., dbl. occ.

Key West

A Key West Coral Reef Trip

(305) 292-1345

Web > www.reefchief.com

Package > Half day's sail on our schooner, snorkel or skin dive a 6- to 15-foot-deep reef, morning trip is \$45 p.p.

Bonsai Diving

(305) 294-2921 **Web** > www.bonsaidiving.com **Package** > 2-tank

wreck and reef dives and breakfast included for \$99 p.p., dbl. occ.

Dive Key West Inc.

(800) 426-0707, (305) 296-3823 **Web** > www.divekeywest.com **Package** > 2 nights' lodging, 2 days' diving, tanks and weights, \$99 p.p., dbl. occ., per day, May through December 2004.

Key West Diving Society

(866) 593-4837, (305) 292-3221 **Web** > www.keywestdivingsociety.com **Package** > 2 nights' accommodations, 2 days of diving, tanks, weights, breakfast for \$191 p.p., dbl. occ., May to October 2004.

Southpoint Divers

(800) 891-DIVE, (305) 292-9778 **Web** > www.southpoint-divers.com **Package** > 3 nights' accommodations in guest house, 2 days of 2-tank diving, from \$299 p.p., dbl. occ. Prices subject to change.

Subtropic Dive Center

(800) 853-DIVE, (305) 296-9914 **Web** > www.subtropic.com **Package** > 3 days, 2 nights' accommodations, 6

dives, tanks and weights for \$433.50, taxes not included.

Marathon

Abyss Dive Center

(800) 457-0134, (305) 743-2126 **Web** > www.abyss-dive.com **Package** > 1-night, 2-location reef trip, from \$79 p.p., per night.

Capt. Hook's Marina & Dive Center

(800) 278-4665, (305) 743-2444 **Web** > www.captainhooks.com **Package** > 7 days' accommodations, 3 dive trips and 1 full day of offshore fishing for \$950 p.p., dbl. occ.

Hall's Diving Center and International Diving Career Institute

(800) 331-HALL, (305) 743-5929 **Web** > www.hallsdiving.com **Package** > 3 to 7 nights' accommodations and wreck and reef diving starting at \$79 p.p., dbl. occ., per day.

Middle Keys Scuba Center

(305) 743-2902 **Web** > www.divingdiscovery.com

Package > 3 nights' accommodations and 3 days' diving, from \$84 p.p., per day.

Tilden's Scuba Center

(877) 386-3483, (305) 289-1021 **Web** > www.tildens-scubacenter.com **Package** > 7 nights' accommodations for 2 adults and 2 children, daily breakfast buffet for family, children 12 and under eat free off children's menu when accompanied by an adult, 1 day participation in the Kids Club, tiki kayak boat rental for 2 children, 1 round of golf for family, from \$1,800, from April 18 to Dec. 24, 2004.

French Polynesia

THE JAGGED GREEN islands of French Polynesia's five archipelagoes rise out of the South Pacific blue in postcard-perfect splendor. Below water, this is shark territory, and hand-feeding is still the method of choice for most dive operators. Operators cater to divers from around the Pacific Rim with resort pickups and fast boats. Afternoon dives are rare, however, so go live-aboard if you want to max out your bottom time.

Best Dives Many divers beat fins to **Rangiroa**, where a 400-square-mile lagoon—the world's second largest—is rimmed with tidal flats and hosts gray reef sharks, blacktip sharks and mantas. If you're looking for nitrogen-filled days of shark diving and romance-filled nights, **Moorea** and **Bora Bora** are safe bets. **Tahiti Iti**, the main island's southern peninsula, is home to remote, pristine wall diving a two-hour drive from Papeete.

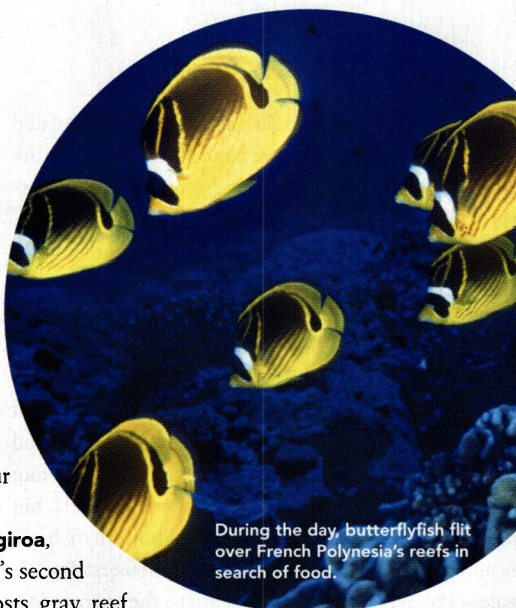
Weather Temperatures are hot and humid in the wet season from November to April. Trade winds moderate the climate and keep conditions drier and in the 70s the rest of the year.

Average Water Temp Varies from the high 70s to mid-80s, depending on the season—and they're reversed here in the southern hemisphere.

Average Visibility Triple digits consistently; this is some of the clearest water in the Pacific.

Travel Savvy You need a passport valid for six months past your date of return.

Destination Links www.gototahiti.com and www.tahiti-tourisme.pf.



During the day, butterflyfish flit over French Polynesia's reefs in search of food.

READER COMMENTS

J.D., Richmond Hill,

N.Y.: "Hard corals stretched as far as the eye could see." L.H.,

Texas: "Great big stuff—sharks on every dive (hundreds on some), mantas, dolphins, eagle rays, turtles, lionfish."

R.H., Dallas, Texas:

"Pristine reefs! Excellent vis, pelagics (mantas and sharks) and small life (clownfish, anemones, etc.). Sharks every-

where!" L.L., San Antonio, Texas: "Lots of sharks, mantas, eagle rays, dolphins. Fast current on pass dives."

M.R., Richton Park, Ill.:

"Many sharks every dive. Warm water. No current."

Bora Bora

Bora Bora Blue Nui

Dive Center (011) 689-

677907 **Web** > [www.blue-](http://www.blue-nui.com)

[nui.com](http://www.blue-nui.com) **Package** > 5 dives,

about \$300 p.p. For lodging

packages with meals included,

go to www.pearlresorts.com.

Bora Diving Center /

Maradive Center

(011)

689-677184 **Web** >

www.boradive.com **Package**

> 5 nights at Hotel Matira in

standard bungalow next to

the beach, 10 dives, all diving

equipment, taxes, transfers

and breakfast, \$993 p.p., dbl.

occ. Valid until June 2004.

Moorea

Bathy's Club Moorea

(011) 689-563144 **Web** >

www.bathys.net **Package** >

10 percent off to Rodale's

Scuba Diving readers who

come with an issue of the

magazine; cannot be com-

bined with other discounts.

Manihi

Manihi Blue Nui Dive

Center (011) 689-964217

Web > www.bluenui.com

Package > 5 dives, about

\$300 p.p. For lodging with

meals included, go to

www.pearlresorts.com.

Tahaa

Tahaa Blue Nui Dive

Center (011) 689-656778

Web > www.bluenui.com

Package > 5 dives, about \$300

p.p. For all-inclusive packages,

see www.pearlresorts.com.

Tahiti

Iti Diving International

(011) 689-577793 **Web** >

www.itidiving.pf **Package** > Do

2 dives per diver, get 10 per-

cent discount off (when making

reservations, during the week)

by bringing copy of Rodale's

Scuba Diving magazine.

Tikehau

Tikehau Blue Nui Dive

Center (011) 689-962240

Web > www.bluenui.com

Package > 5 dives, about

\$300 p.p. For lodging with

meals included, go to

www.pearlresorts.com.



Hawaii

IT MAY BE THE 50TH STATE, but Hawaii is also one of the most isolated island chains on earth. In fact, at 2,500 miles from the closest continent, the islands are so remote that more than a quarter of its fish are found nowhere else on the planet. Fortunately for American divers, it's also an exotic destination without language barriers, passport requirements and currency exchange. Though it doesn't have the colorful coral reefs common elsewhere in the Pacific, it does have unique underwater structures punctuated by lava formations and tubes, and some excellent wreck dives.

Best Dives Kauai's **Sheraton Caverns**, a series of lava tubes that range in depth from 20 to 60 feet, is stuffed with Hawaiian turkeyfish, lobster, wrasse and eels. Advanced divers may want to skip Maui's **Molokini Crater** and head for current-swept **Moku Ho'oniki Island** and glimpses of hammerheads. Oahu boasts surprisingly good wrecks, including the 180-foot oil tanker **YO-257** and its neighbor wreck, the 155-foot freighter **San Pedro**. The Big Island's **Garden Eel Cove** boasts its namesake eels, but also endemic Hawaiian species like Heller's barracuda and milletseed butterflyfish.

Weather The islands are sunny and warm with frequent, brief rain showers. There's very little annual variation in climate—the average high is 85 degrees; the average low 70 degrees.

Average Water Temp Water temps can bottom out in the low to mid-70s in winter and spring, with lows in the 80s in summer and fall.

Average Visibility Vis is usually excellent; often above 100 feet.

Destination Links www.gohawaii.com.

Kauai

Bubbles Below Inc. Scuba Charters-Kauai and Niihau (866)

KAIMANU, (808) 332-7333 **Web** > bubblesbelowkauai.com **Package** > Dive 3 days and receive 10 percent off each day; the 4th through 6th day, receive 15 percent off, and the 7th is 20 percent off.

Dive Kauai Scuba Center (800) 828-3483, (808) 822-0452 **Web** > www.divekauai.com **Package** > 7 nights in garden-view room at the Kauai Sands Hotel, 7 days' rental car, unlimited mileage on the car, 2 days of 2-tank boat charters, \$555 p.p., dbl. occ.

Hawaii Tec & Trek Scuba (808) 644-1312 **Web** > www.kauaiscuba.com **Package** > Earn cavern diver certifications at Tunnels Beach. 3 days, 4 dives, rental of specialty equipment included, \$670 p.p.

Ocean Quest Fathom Five (800)

972-3078, (808) 742-6991 **Web** >

www.fathomfive.com **Package** > 2-tank dive, \$100 includes tanks and weights.

Seasport Divers (800) 685-5889, (808) 742-9303 **Web** > www.seasport-divers.com **Package** > Niihau charter, \$255 for certified diver, includes 3 dives, breakfast, lunch, snack, tanks and weights.

Sunrise Scuba Adventures & Kauai Nitrox Divers (800) 695-3483, (808) 635-7333 **Web** > www.sunriescuba.com **Package** > Discover Scuba Diving program, \$98.

Maui

Dive & Sea Maui (800) 526-9915, (808) 874-1952 **Web** > www.diveandseamaui.com **Package** > Rodale's Scuba Diving magazine special, book 2 or more days and take off 10 percent with booking.

Dive Maui (866) 821-7450, (808) 667-2080 **Web** > www.divemaui.com

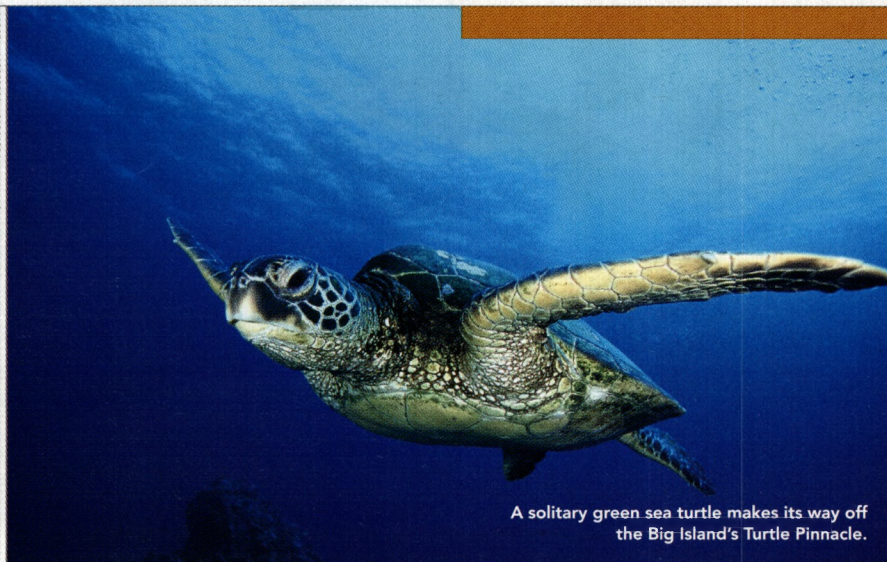
READER COMMENTS

BIG ISLAND R.J., Iron River, Wis.: "The island is beautiful with a large variety of activities available. Being new to the Pacific, it was fun to see fish and creatures not found in the Caribbean." **J.T., El Dorado Hills, Calif.:** "The night manta ray dive is something everyone should do." **M.F., Placerville, Calif.:** "Beautiful, relaxing. Wonderful, warm people." **MAUI T.A., Rancho Cucamonga, Calif.:** "The visibility was unbelievable. At 90 feet we could look up and see our boat and the boat next to it." **M.B., Wasilla, Alaska:** "The back wall of Molokini Crater is one of the best wall dives in the world. You can see the bottom at more than 200 feet down." **KAUAI P.C., Bellevue, Wash.:** "Loved the turtles, whitetips and morays." **B.M., San Diego, Calif.:** "This is one laid-back island. Rest, relaxation and diving." **OAHU N.H., Los Angeles, Calif.:** "Perfect weather, everything within walking distance, clean waters and beaches, friendly locals." **R.T., Clark, N.J.:** "Visibility was great! Water was warm! Great variety of fish."

Package > 2-tank boat dives, \$119 for certified divers.

Ed Robinson's Diving Adventures (800) 635-1273, (808) 879-3584 **Web** > www.maui-scuba.com **Package** > 7 days, 6 nights' accommodations and 3 days of diving (2-tank local trip each day), starting at \$564 p.p., dbl. occ., plus tax





A solitary green sea turtle makes its way off the Big Island's Turtle Pinnacle.

(cannot be combined with any other discounts).

Extended Horizons Scuba Maui Lanai (888) 348-3628, (808) 667-0611

Web > www.scubadivemaui.com **Package** > 2 days, 1 night, includes 4 boat dives to Lanai, meals included on boat dives, 1

night dive, \$303.30 p.p.; tax not included.

Lahaina Divers, Inc. (800) 998-3483, (808) 667-7496 **Web**: www.lahaina-divers.com **Package** > 3 days of 2-tank charters to 3 islands for \$300 p.p., including tanks, weights, snacks, beverages and gear transport. Book by June 30th, dive by July 30, 2004; direct bookings only. Cannot be combined with other offers.

Makena Coast Dive Charters (800) 833-6483, (808) 874-1273 **Web** > www.mauiunderwater.com **Package** > 10 percent discount on multiple dive days.

Mark's Water Fantasy Diving Maui Hawaii (866) 385-DIVE, **Web** > www.waterfantasydiving.com **Package** > Honeymoon Special includes all gear, 4 dives and certification cards for \$650.

Maui Dive Shop (800) 542-3483, (808) 879-1775 **Web** > www.maudiveshop.com **Package** > 7 nights' lodging at Maui Dive Lodge, 4 boat dives, 2 tanks each, and unlimited shore diving, \$1,073.

Maui Scuba Diving (877) 873-4837, (808) 669-2071 **Web** > www.mauiscubadiving.cc **Package** > 3 days of diving for \$249.90 p.p., includes 2-tank boat dive,

night dive and daytime beach dive.

Mike Severns Diving (808) 879-6596 **Web** > www.mikesevernsdiving.com **Package** > 3 days or more of diving, \$10 off per day.

Scuba Shack Hawaii Maui (877) 213-4488, (808) 891-0500 **Web** > www.scubashack.com **Package** > Week-long accommodations in 2-bedroom, 2-bath condos, 3 days of boat diving and unlimited beach diving, \$700 p.p., dbl. occ.

The Dive Authority-Maui (808) 871-2558 **Web** > oceanconcepts.com **Package** > 2-tank dives, \$112, with gear.

Oahu

AAA Diving (877) 617-2822, (808) 221-8346 **Web** > www.aaadiving.com **Package** > Open-water divers choose 3 charters, including at least 1 deep dive, to earn their PADI advanced open-water certification, \$345 to \$390 p.p., plus tax.

Aarons Dive Shop (888) 84-SCUBA, (808) 262-2333 **Web** > www.hawaii-scuba.com **Package** > 3-day package, including visit to the USS Arizona Memorial, a traditional luau, dive in the Atlantis Submarine and snorkeling in Hanauma Bay, for \$395 p.p.

AquaZone Scuba Diving & Water Sports (866) 923-3483, (808) 923-3483 **Web** > aquazone.net **Package** > 7 nights' hotel, 5 days' diving, dive equipment, transportation to boats,

\$1,229 p.p., dbl. occ.

Breeze Hawaii Diving Adventures (808) 735-1857 **Web** >

www.breezehawaii.com **Package** > On days 3 and 4, get 10 percent discount; book 5 or more days of diving, get 20 percent discount.

Ocean Concepts Scuba (800) 808-3483, (808) 677-7975 **Web** > oceanconcepts.com **Package** > 8 locations: Camp Smith, Kaneohe, Kapolei, Navy Exchange, Pearl Harbor, Waianae, Waikale and Ward Avenue. 3 days of 2-tank, 2-location deep/shallow profile boat dives, including all equipment, round-trip transport from hotels, fresh fruit, snacks, light lunch, soft beverages, \$305.

Big Island

Dive Makai Charters (808) 329-2025 **Web** > www.divemakai.com **Package** > More than 5 days of diving, from \$85, plus taxes, for a 2-tank morning dive.

Jack's Diving Locker (800) 345-4807, (808) 329-7585 **Web** > www.jacks-divinglocker.com **Package** > 7 nights at the Royal Kona Resort and 3 morning dive trips, 2 tanks each (state and hotel taxes not included), \$638 p.p., dbl. occ.

Kona Honu Divers (888) 333-4668, (808) 324-4668 **Web** > www.kona-honudivers.com **Package** > 2-tank, 2-location boat dive, weights, fresh fruit, snacks and beverages included, \$89.95.

Red Sail Sports Hawaii (877) RED-SAIL, (808) 886-2876 **Web** > www.redsail-hawaii.com **Package** > 2004 Dive, Dive, Dive & Sail Package: Choose your own accommodations and make daily dives with Red Sail Sports. Includes daily 2-tank boat dives, tanks, weights and belt, sunset cruise aboard 50-foot catamaran, Red Sail Sports T-shirt and 10 percent discount on clothing at all Red Sail Sports retail locations. Packages start at \$355 p.p. for 3 days. Each extra day is \$105 p.p. Valid through Dec. 19, 2004.



Micronesia

THE THOUSANDS OF ISLANDS that make up Micronesia are surrounded by some of the most biologically diverse and pristine reefs in the world. Some of diving's most renowned destinations are among these islands, including Palau, Yap, Truk, Pohnpei, Kosrae, the Marshall Islands, Guam, Rota and Saipan. Although the distance to travel is great, the trek pays off with untouched diving on islands that have yet to witness widespread development or exploitation.

Best Dives To make the most of a trip to Micronesia, it's best to incorporate several islands into your itinerary. Whether you decide on a land-based package or opt for the live-aboard route, your dive experience will differ dramatically depending on where you dive. Palau's steep walls like **Blue Corner** are a rite of passage, Yap's manta dives are legendary, and Truk is an underwater mecca for wreck divers.

Weather Tropical and humid with daytime temperatures hovering in the mid- to high 80s. Nighttime temps can drop to the mid- to low 70s.

Average Water Temp Water temps remain in the high 70s to mid-80s all year.

Average Visibility More than 100 feet of vis is not uncommon on good days off Palau, Saipan and Rota, off Pohnpei and Kosrae's outer reefs and on Yap's wall dives. Vis can be slightly lower in Truk Lagoon and on manta dives in Yap.

Travel Savvy Passports are recommended. Departure taxes vary by island, ranging from \$10 to \$20.

Destination Links www.visit-palau.com (Palau), www.visit-yap.com (Yap), www.visitguam.org (Guam), www.visit-chuuk.com (Truk), www.visit-kosrae.com (Kosrae), and www.visit-fsm.org (the Federated States of Micronesia).

Kosrae

Kosrae Nautilus Resort Inc. (011) 691-370-3567 **Web** > www.kosraenautilus.com **Package** > 5 nights' accommodations and 4 dive days for \$500 p.p., dbl. occ., for *Scuba Diving* readers.

Kosrae Village Ecolodge /

Sleeping Lady Divers (011) 691-370-3483 **Web** > www.kosraevillage.com **Package** > 5 nights, 3 dive days, 2 tanks each, \$553 p.p., dbl. occ., tax included. Nitrox available for a small surcharge.

Marshall Islands

Bikini Atoll Divers (011) 692-625-4265 **Web** > www.bikiniatoll.com **Package** > \$2,850 for one week, includes meals and room on Bikini; all airfare, hotel rooms and meals outside of Bikini excluded.

Palau

Fish 'n Fins (011) 680-488-2637 **Web** > www.fishnfins.com **Package** > 7 nights at West Plaza Hotels, 5 days of 2-tank diving, 1 day canoe/kayak tour, all transfers, continental breakfast, lunches and drinks, unlimited diving at our house reef, \$795 p.p., dbl. occ.

Neco Marine (800) 348-0842, (011) 680-488-2009/1755 **Web** > www.necomarine.com **Package** > 2-tank dive day, including dive guide, tanks, weights, hotel pickup and delivery, lunch, drinks and scenic tour to and from dive sites, \$99.50.

Sam's Tours (011) 680-488-1062 **Web** > www.samstours.com **Package** > 7 nights at West Plaza Hotel, 5 days of 2-tank boat diving, Jellyfish Lake visit, guided kayak tour, daily breakfast and lunch, refreshments on tours, hotel room tax, diving permits, round-trip airport and

A diver explores the cockpit of a Japanese floatplane that sank during World War II off Palau.



READER COMMENTS

GUAM C.S., Beaufort, S.C.: "The sea life was great! Wrecks were awesome!" **PALAU P.D., Manitowoc, Wis.:** "Great reef environments, big animals, and service." **TRUK LAGOON B.M., Oshkosh, Wis.:** "Wrecks beyond belief." **YAP A.W., Canton, Mass.:** "The large animal encounters are awesome. Manta rays live up to their reputation. People are authentic and genuinely nice."

hotel transfers, tanks, weights and belt, \$880 p.p., dbl. occ. Mention *Scuba Diving* magazine and get a free Palau dive site poster.

Splash Dive Center (011) 680-488-2600, ext. 485 **Web** > www.splash-palau.com **Package** > 2 tanks (1 morning and afternoon dive), \$110; prices subject to change.

Continued on page 110 >>>

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culture.



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or email
yvb@mail.fm.

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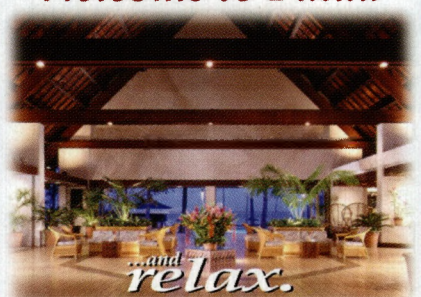
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Pohnpei

the Village (011) 691-320-2797 **Web** > thevillagehotel.com **Package** > E-mail thevillage@mail.fm for rate information on accommodations and diving packages.

Rota

Dive Rota (011) 670-532-3377 **Web** > www.diverota.com **Package** > Diving and accommodations packages available; room rates from \$35 p.p., dbl. occ., per night.

Truk Lagoon

Truk Lagoon Dive Center / Truk Stop Hotel (011) 691-330-4232 **Web** > www.trukstophotel.net **Package** > 2-tank morning dive, \$84. Accommodations in standard room, \$95 p.p., per night; add 10 percent government tax.

Yap

Beyond The Reef (011) 691-350-3483 **Web** > www.diveyap.com **Package** > 7 nights at Hilltop Motel, 6 days of diving (2 dives each day), tanks, weights, guide, all transfers, taxes, and snacks on dive days, \$743.25 p.p., dbl. occ.

Dive Ulithi Scuba Center - Ulithi Divers (808) 639-4722 **Web** > www.diveulithi.com **Package** > 5 days' accommodations, 3 dive days, airport and hotel transfers, from \$749 p.p., dbl. occ., plus tax. Dive permits not included.

Nature's Way (011) 691-350-3407 **Web** > www.naturesway.fm **Package** > 7-day package with Hilltop Motel includes 12 dives, accommodations and lunches on dive days for \$710 p.p., dbl. occ.

Manta Ray Bay Hotel and Yap

Divers (800) 348-3927, (011) 691-350-2300 **Web** > www.mantaray.com **Package** > 7-night, 17-dive package in garden-view room, including 6 days of 2-tank diving, 3 days of third tank diving, a mandarin fish dive, night dive, boats, weights, belts, tanks, guides, boat captain, towel, hot tea and snacks on dives, 1-day kayak tour through the mangroves, airport transfers, all taxes, late checkout until 6 p.m., \$1,279 p.p., dbl. occ. Valid for arrivals through Dec. 21, 2004.

Traders' Ridge Resort (877) 350-1300, (011) 691-350-6000 **Web** > www.tradersridge.com **Package** > 7 nights, 5 dive days, from \$1,740 p.p., dbl. occ., includes 15 percent room tax and service charge, boat, guide, weights, tanks and snacks.

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A school of batfish hugs the reeftop at Susan's Reef in Kimbe Bay.



Papua New Guinea

WHEN YOU'RE ON THE 30-HOUR SERIES of flights that takes you to Papua New Guinea, remember this: the diving will be well worth the travel time. Located north of Australia in the confluence of major ocean currents from Japan, the Indian Ocean, the South Pacific and the Great Barrier Reef, the island nation is awash in an astounding mix of 900 species of fish and 400 species of coral that make it one of the hottest destinations on earth for underwater photographers.

Best Dives PNG is best suited to experienced divers who can handle remote locations, extreme depths and open-ocean conditions. Most diving revolves around pinnacles—submerged volcanic peaks now overgrown with colorful, healthy corals, but there are also big animal encounters and famous World War II wrecks.

Weather Tropical year-round with temperatures in the mid- to upper 80s.

Average Water Temp Range from the mid-70s to mid-80s, depending on season.

Average Visibility 80 feet with days of 150 to 200 feet from October to May.

Travel Savvy A valid passport is necessary for U.S. and Canadian travelers. You

can get a 60-day tourist visa on arrival, but it's best to obtain one in advance from the PNG Embassy at (202) 745-3680 or at www.pngembassy.org. Departure tax is usually included in airline ticket price.

Destination Links www.png-tourism.org.pg

READER COMMENTS

D.C., Tokyo, Japan: "PNG—specifically Milne Bay—is quite remote. We only encountered one other boat on one afternoon in a week of diving. Visibility, sea life and overall condition of reefs was incredible." *M.S., Tahoe City, Calif.:* "Perfect marine environment." *J.A., Tarzana, Calif.:* "PNG is great for macro photography. Very clear visibility." *M.K., Alexandria, Va.:* "The great variety of fish and critters makes PNG fantastic." *J.P., Milwaukee, Wis.:* "Great macro photos! I saw large numbers of fish life, small and large. The reefs are in excellent condition." *L.A., Salt Lake City, Utah:* "I enjoyed the health and diversity of the invertebrates and hard coral. Fantastic experience!" *P.T., Ottawa, Ontario:* "I liked the health of reef and corals, variety of marine life."

Aquaventures PNG (011) 675-852-2023 **Web** > www.aquaventures-png.com
Package > Located on the grounds of Jais Aben Resort. E-mail jaisaben@global.net.pg for package rates.

Lissenung Diving /Lissenung Island Resort (011) 675-984-2526

Web > www.lissenung.com **Package** > E-mail info@lissenung.com for package rates.

Papua Diving (011) 62-411-401660

Web > www.papua-diving.com **Package** > E-mail info@papua-diving.com for rates.

The Dive Centre (011) 675-320-1200 **Web** > www.divecentre.com.pg

Package > E-mail divecentre-png@datec.com.pg for accommodations and dive package information.

Tufi Dive Resort (011) 675-320-1484

Web > www.tufidive.com **Package** > 7-day package, includes 7 nights' accommo-

dations, all meals, 10 dives, including 2 wharf dives, \$950. Round-trip airfare to Tufi from Port Moresby, \$235.

Walindi Plantation Resort (011) 675-983-5441 **Web** > www.walindi.com

Package > Beachside bungalow, round-trip transfers, all meals, 2 reef dives per day or Plantation House accommodations with private bathroom, all meals and laundry. E-mail info@Walindi.com for rates.



Puerto Rico

IF YOU ONLY KNOW PUERTO RICO as the island where you change planes en route to more remote parts of the Caribbean, you don't know what you're missing. There's diverse diving all around this 100- by 35-mile island, from beginner-friendly coral gardens to steep-and-deep walls, a handful of wrecks and some offshore islets with truly world-class reefs.

Best Dives From San Juan, wreck aficionados head east for Culebra Island and the fully

penetrable wreck of the **Witt Power**. You'll also find plenty of shallow reefs off **Fajardo** and the island of **Vieques**. **Desecheo Island**, found off the west coast of Puerto Rico, is known for stunning reefs and abundance of fish. Off the island's southwest coast is the **Black Wall**, where you'll see dark coral trees and fans.

Weather Temperatures average 85 degrees in the summer and 83 degrees in the winter.

Average Water Temp 85 degrees in the summer to a balmy 75 degrees in the winter.

READER COMMENTS

M.W., West Jordan, Utah: "Enjoy all of the comforts of home with a Latin flavor. Being able to travel to the Caribbean and not having to deal with currency exchanges and passports is great." **A.R., Nanuet, N.Y.:** "This place feels like an undiscovered location."

Average Visibility About 60 to 80 feet—sometimes greater at offshore dive sites.

Destination Links

www.gotopuertorico.com.

Aquatica Underwater

Adventures (787) 890-6071 **Web**

> www.aquatica.cjb.net **Package** >

2-tank dive trips, includes all gear, weights, snacks and beverages, \$70.

Caribe Aquatic Adventures

(787) 724-1882 **Web** > www.dive-guide.com/p2046.htm **Package** >

1-day excursion (departing San Juan 8:30 a.m. and returning around 5:30 p.m.), for groups of 4 to 6 persons,

to the east coast and Palominos. Package includes land transportation from San Juan to Fajardo, 2

boat dives, equipment, lunch and soft drinks, \$135 for divers and \$85 for nondivers.

Culebra Divers

(787) 742-0803 **Web** > www.culebradivers.com

Package > Daily 2-tank dive trips, \$85, including tanks and weights.

Dive Copamarina (800) 468-4553, (787) 821-0505 **Web** >

www.copamarina.com **Package** >

Ocean-view room, breakfast, lunch, dinner, house wine with lunch and dinner, juices, soft drinks, local and international alcoholic beverages, nonmotorized watersports, \$355 p.p.,

per day. Rates subject to change.

La Casa Del Mar (800) 468-5228, (787) 860-3483 **Web** >

www.lacasadelmar.net **Package** > 6 dives, tanks, weights, lunch, drinks,

fresh fruit, snacks and towels on board, \$250; valid until Dec. 1,

2004.

Mundo Submarino, Inc.

(787) 791-5764 **Web** > www.mundo-submarino.net **Package** > Full day

Continued on page 134 >>>



PUERTO RICO

www.GoToPuertoRico.com

6 days, 5 nights • 3 days, 1 tank shore dive • El Yunque Rainforest Sightseeing Tour • Continental bkfst. daily • 4/15-9/30/04 \$550 pp dbi OCC Park Plaza Normandie Considered one of the finest examples of art-deco architecture in the Caribbean, located in historical Old San Juan. Most rooms offer a parlor and a sunroom. Concierge services, excellent pool, and restaurants. Dive with Caribe Aquatic Adventures on site PADI/NAUI Dive Center.	6 days, 5 nights • 3 days, 2 tank boat dives • Kayabiking adventure • 1/1-12/21/04 \$590 pp dbi OCC Parador Villa Parguera Situated on beautiful Bioluminescent Bay facing the Caribbean in La Parguera, this property offers seafood & international cuisine and lots of watersports nearby. Convention center, live music, dancing and shows on the weekends. Diving with Paradise Scuba Center.
6 days, 5 nights • 4 days, 2 tank boat dives • Children 12 and under stay for free, play & eat free • RT transfers • 7/1-10/17/04 \$913 pp dbi OCC Wyndham El Conquistador Located atop a 300-foot cliff in the Fajardo area overlooking the sea. Offering 16 restaurants, casino, 18-hole golf course, Golden Door Spa, horseback riding, fitness center and 6 pools. La Casa del Mar on site PADI dive operator.	6 days, 5 nights • 3 days, 2 tank boat dives to Mayaguez Reef • 1 Desecheo Island & Cabo Rojo Wall, 2 tank boat dives • 1/1-12/21/04 \$464 pp dbi OCC Parador Perichi's Enjoy the outdoor life in Cabo Rojo always surrounded by cool breezes from the sea. Offering a beautifully decorated award winning dining room. Walk to the beach and golf, casino, marina, watersports and tennis. Excellent dive options available.
6 days, 5 nights • 4 days, 2 tank boat dives • Plus one free night dive (weather permitting) • 2 T-shirts • 4/12-12/21/04 \$635 pp dbi OCC Copamarina Beach Resort Beachfront in Guánica on 20 acres with 3/4 mile long beach fronting the Caribbean Sea, offering watersports, tennis, Bodyderm Spa, 4 pools, 2 jacuzzis, open-air dining for breakfast and lunch. Dive with on-site dive operator Sea Ventures Dive Copamarina.	6 days, 5 nights • 4 days, 2 tank boat dives • Continental bkfst. daily • 1/1-12/21/04 \$498 pp dbi OCC The Lazy Parrot Atop the La Cadena Hills, this unique inn is located in the sleepy little town of Rincón and caters to beachgoers, divers, surfers and all who wish to experience the flora, fauna and historical sites of western Puerto Rico. Excellent dive options available.



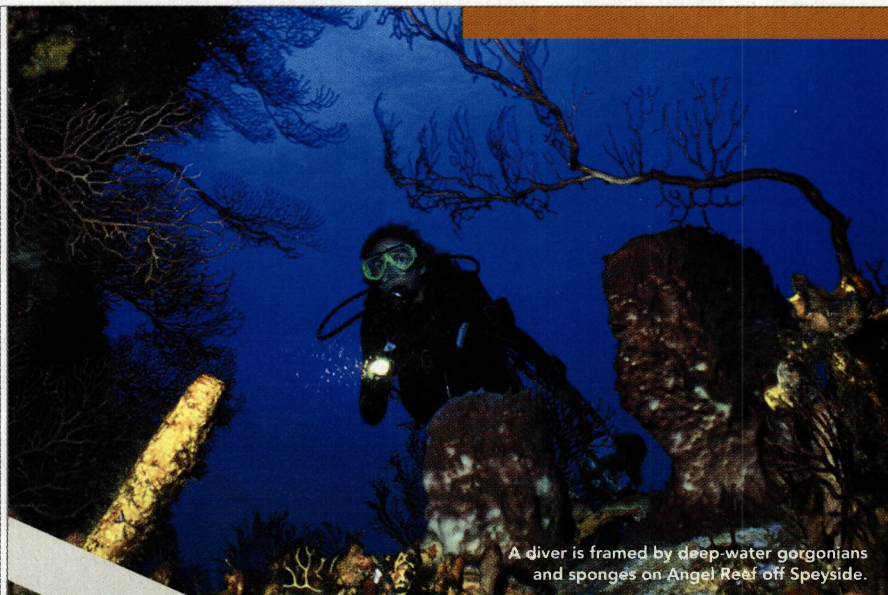
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A diver is framed by deep-water gorgonians and sponges on Angel Reef off Speyside.

Tobago

PREPARE YOURSELF FOR A WILD RIDE when you dive the reefs of Tobago. That's wild, as in healthy reefs and marine life ranging from tiny tropical fish to massive manta rays, and ride, as in drift diving. This hidden gem of an island has been compared to a boulder in the middle of a swift river; in this case, the river is the Guyana Current, which flows along the South American coast and hits Tobago's Atlantic shore. The water then

shoots around the northern and southern tips of the island offering safe excitement for drift divers of all skill levels.

Best Dives Off the town of Speyside, **Bookends** is a great drift dive marked by twin peaks of black rock and a rich reef slope of hard and soft corals. From Charlotteville, you're just a short boat ride from **London Bridge**, a deep-water pinnacle topped with a picturesque arch. Staying in Crown Point, don't miss **The Scarlett Ibis**, an old inter-island ferry sunk as an artificial reef.

Weather Offshore trade winds keep the temperature in the mid-80s year-round.

Average Water Temp About 80 degrees in summer, dropping to between 68 and 71 degrees in winter.

Average Visibility About 80 feet, though it can be lower during the June-to-October rainy season.

Travel Savvy U.S. and Canadian citizens will need a passport and a return ticket to visit Tobago.

Destination Links www.visit-TNT.com.

READER COMMENTS

C.S., Marietta, Ga.: "Dives off Little Tobago (Speyside) were as good as any dives I have ever been on. Lots of fish and excellent visibility. Current was very strong on some of the dives." **C.S., Houston, Texas:** "Quiet life on shore but the fun gets into high gear when you step on the dive boats." **K.W., Miami, Fla.:** "Tobagonians are the friendliest people on the earth, and their dive sites are rich in large and small marine life. Every dive presented something new." **K.D., Farmington Hills, Mich.:** "Snorkeling with mantas! Plenty of turtles." **M.T., Kingwood, Texas:** "Tobago truly is an island paradise." **S.P., Nienburg, Germany:** "Excellent diving for both experienced divers and beginners. Mostly small groups and an unspoiled underwater world."

AquaMarine Dive (868) 660-5445

Web > www.aquamarinedive.com **Package** > 7 nights at the Blue Waters Inn in standard ocean-view room, 5 dives, breakfast, transfers and taxes, \$543.12 p.p., dbl. occ., valid from June 1 to Oct. 31, 2004.

Manta Dive Center, Ltd. (868)

639-9209 **Web** > www.mantadive.com

Package > 7 days, accommodations in 3-star hotel on the beach, 10 boat dives to sites including the Sisters, Speyside, Diver's Dream and the wreck of the *Maverick*, transfers, \$845 p.p., dbl. occ. Price doesn't include full day trips.

Proscuba Dive Centre (868) 639-

7424 **Web** > www.sportextreme.com/phdoov3453.

R&Sea Divers Co., Ltd. (868) 639-

8120 **Web** > www.rseadivers.com **Package** > 10 boat dives, \$250;

accommodations and car rental arranged on request.

Tobago Dive Masters (868) 639-

4697 **Web** > www.tobagodivemasters.net

Package > 10 or more dives, \$28 per dive.

Undersea Tobago (868) 631-2626

Web > www.underseatobago.com.

Wild Turtle Dive Safari (868) 639-

7936 **Web** > www.wildturtledive.com

Package > 7-day, 6-night, 10-dive package including gear, accommodations, daily breakfast and dinner, starting from \$755 for 1 person and \$1,210 for 2 people. 2-day dive safari consisting of an overnight trip with 5 dives along the Caribbean coast, including 1 night dive and at least 1 dive at the Sisters (known for frequent sightings of schools of hammerhead sharks), camping accommodations on secluded beach, gear and freshly prepared local food, \$275 p.p.

World of Watersports

Caribbean, Ltd. (866) 4-TOBAGO,

(868) 660-7234 **Web** > www.worldofwatersports.com **Package** > E-mail info@worldofwatersports.com for special summer discounts on packages.



Turks & Caicos

THERE ARE MORE POPULAR wall-diving destinations in the Caribbean, but none can top this island nation for sheer, deep thrills. The islands—including beachy Provo, quiet Grand Turk and silent Salt Cay—offer steep, coral- and sponge-covered drop-offs, great visibility and some excellent chances to spot pelagic fish.

Best Dives Dive operators make the hour-long trip to walls off West Caicos daily, and for good reason—they're steep, they're colorful and they're fishy. Just a wetsuit-donning from shore, **The Library** off Grand Turk is a sheer drop-off where glimpses of jacks and mantas are possible. The **HMS Endymion**, an hour south of Salt Cay, is an 18th-century English warship that's more reef than wreck—with scattered cannons, anchors and ballast stones in just 30 feet of water.

Weather Average daytime temps ranging from highs around 90 degrees in summer to lows in the mid-70s in winter.

Average Water Temp From the low to mid-80s in summer to the mid- to high 70s in winter.

Average Visibility Averages 100 feet year-round.

Travel Savvy A passport or birth certificate with a valid photo ID are required for U.S. and Canadian citizens. Departure tax is \$23.

Destination Links www.turksandcaicostourism.com.

READER COMMENTS

GRAND TURK & SALT CAY J.A., *Harvard, Mass.:*

"Loved the small, quaint, laid-back little island." S.B., *Kirkland, Wash.:* "Amazing diving with a very healthy reef. Abundant macro life." **PROVIDENCIALES** C.B., *Bozeman, Mont.:* "Awesome wall diving—sharks, eagle rays, turtles!" M.B., *Bowie, Md.:* "Beautiful place. Nice and quiet." J.C., *E. Greenwich, R.I.:* "Good visibility, warm water, good mix of large marine life, healthy coral and sponges, both wall and reef diving." T.C., *New York, N.Y.:* "The reefs are beautiful. Vis is great and so are the sharks and other marine life!" B.D., *Encino, Calif.:* "Great wall dives, sharks plentiful, healthy reef." J.P., *Pueblo, Colo.:* "Superb diving, quiet island, great food. Nothing I didn't like." G.S., *Mattuck, N.Y.:* "Wall diving was awesome and visibility great." M.S., *Marlton, N.J.:* "People are great. U.S. dollars are used. Easy to get there."

SOUTH CAICOS M.F., *Santa Ana, Calif.:* "Excellent diving and weather."

Big sponges and gorgonians are hallmarks of Turks & Caicos dive sites.



Grand Turk & Salt Cay

Blue Water Divers (649)

946-2432 Web > www.grand-turkscuba.com Package > 7 nights' hotel, 6 days of diving, airport transfers, government tax, welcome drink, 2 dives daily and unlimited beach dives, \$837 p.p., dbl. occ.

Cecil Ingham's Sea Eye Diving of Grand Turk (800) 786-0669, (649)

946-1407 Web > www.seaeyediving.com Package > 5 nights in air-conditioned superior room at Turks Head Inn, 4 days of diving (8 dives), continental breakfast daily, unlimited shore diving, government bed tax, airport transfers, welcome cocktail, \$552.50 p.p., dbl. occ. Rates subject to change in 2004.

Oasis Divers - Grand Turk (800) 892-3995, (649)

946-1128 Web > www.oasis-divers.com Package > 7

nights' accommodations at the Island House, 6 days of 2-tank diving, unlimited shore diving, vehicle included, full kitchen, \$885 p.p., from June 1 to Dec. 20, 2004. Package includes tax and airport transfers.

Salt Cay Divers (649)

946-6906 Web > www.salt-caydivers.tc Package > 7 nights' accommodations at the Tradewinds Guest Suites, 15 boat dives over 6 days, unlimited shore diving, night dives, trips to both Grand Turk and Salt Cay's walls, trips to 18th century British warship, night dives, land transfers and all taxes, \$799 p.p., dbl. occ., prices subject to change in 2004.

Providenciales

Dive Provo (800) 234-

Continued on page 134 >>>



Topside views in the U.S. Virgin Islands rival the underwater scenery.

U.S. Virgin Islands

SURE, IT'S THE U.S. FLAG FLYING over the green peaks of St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix, but the warm trade wind snapping it to attention is as West Indian as peas and rice. In fact, everywhere you look in the U.S. Virgin Islands, you see a mix of island ambience with U.S. convenience and security. Your underwater options in this U.S. Trust Territory range from shallow patch reefs to some of the deepest wall diving anywhere.

Best Dives From St. Thomas, don't miss **Cow and Calf Rocks**, a maze of tunnels, swim-through archways and caves painted in encrusting sponges. Advanced divers will love **Sail Rock**, a trio of current-swept pinnacles swarmed by schooling horse-eye jacks. On St. John, divers of all skill levels love **Congo Cay**, where topside cliffs plunge into the water, then break up into a sloping boulder field that is covered with hard and soft corals. Keep your eyes open for hawksbill turtles and spotted eagle rays. Wall divers rejoice in the numerous deep dives of St. Croix, including **Salt River Canyon**, where a submerged river canyon intersects the north shore wall.

Weather From December to May, temperatures average 60 to 75 degrees, while summer temps average 80 to 85 degrees.

Average Water Temp Mid-80s in summer, dropping to the upper 70s in winter.

Average Visibility Between 60 and 100 feet.

Travel Savvy Because the islands are a U.S. territory, there are no customs or immigration lines when you arrive from the U.S. mainland. However, bring your passport (or birth certificate and a valid driver's license) to prove citizenship before boarding the return flight.

Destination Links www.usvitourism.vi

St. Croix

Anchor Dive Center

(800) 532-3483, (340) 778-1522 **Web** > www.anchordivestcroix.com **Package** > 7 nights at Divi Carina Bay Resort, round-trip air from anywhere in U.S. or Canada, airport/resort transfers, 3 days of 2-tank diving (6 dives), Buck Island snorkel trip, Salt River National Park & Ecological Preserve kayak tour, \$20 casino package, daily Divi breakfast, \$1,350.50 p.p., dbl. occ., airport tax not included and 8 percent hotel tax (\$35) not included.

Cane Bay Dive Shop

(800) 338-3843, (340) 773-9913 **Web** > www.canebayscuba.com **Package** > 5 nights, 6 dives, \$525 p.p., dbl. occ.

Dive Experience (800)

235-9047, (340) 773-3307

Web > www.divexp.com

Package > 7 days' hotel accommodations, 10 dives, \$623 p.p., dbl. occ.

N2 The Blue Diving

Adventures (866) 712-

BLUE, (340) 713-1475 **Web** >

www.n2blue.com **Package** >

2-tank boat dive, \$65; 10-tank dive package (5 mornings of

READER COMMENTS

G.B., Greensburg, Pa.: "I loved the beach diving on St. Croix. The wall is an excellent beginner to advanced dive with endless variety." **T.F., Vineland, N.J.:** "Water temp was perfect, we never got cold. Lots of green eels and stingrays. Many different colorful fish." **T.S., Gonzales, Iowa:** "Vis was great, 60 to 100 feet. Can't see going to a better place." **K.S., Mineral Wells, W. Va.:** "Great shore diving, short boat rides." **J.L., Manlius, N.Y.:** "Lots of turtles, morays, peacock flounders, squid, some octopuses, crabs and lobsters." **D.M., West Newton, Pa.:** "Great shore diving. People are very friendly. The water is warm."



2-tank dives), \$275. All boat dives include tanks, weights and dive computer. Free tanks for shore diving on day of package. Accommodations packages available.

Scuba Shack (888) STX-DIVE, (340) 772-DIVE **Web** > www.stcroixscubashack.com **Package** > 7-day dive package includes 2 dives a day (14 dives) for \$435; 5-day (10 dives) for \$325; 3-day (6 dives) for \$205. One night dive can be substituted for one 2-tank boat dive. Carambola Resort packages start at \$569 for 3 dive days and 4 nights.

St. Croix Ultimate Bluewater Adventures

(877) 567-1367, (340) 773-5994 **Web** > www.stcroixscuba.com **Package** > First 2 days of 2-tank dives are \$85 per day; all subsequent 2-tank dives are \$60. Packages available at a variety of luxury villas, beachfront hotels, small inns and B&Bs.

The Waves at Cane Bay (800) 545-0603, (340) 778-1805 **Web** >

www.canebaystcroix.com **Package** > Free tanks, weights and underwater map of the Cane Bay Wall to guests. Standard oceanfront room with kitchenette, \$75 p.p., single or double, per night, from July 1 to Oct. 31, 2004.

St. John

Cruz Bay Watersports Co. (340) 776-6234 **Web** > www.divestjohn.com **Package** > 10-dive package, \$325 (including gear); \$295 (with-

out gear).

Low Key Watersports

(800) 835-7718, (340) 693-8999 **Web** > www.divelowkey.com **Package** > 10-tank packages (5 days of 2-tank, 2-location dives), \$300 (with rental gear) and \$270 (without rental gear). Packages may include the wreck of the *General Rodgers* and one night dive.

Maho Bay Camps (800) 392-9004, (340) 776-6226, ext. 239 **Web** >

www.maho.org **Package** > Discover Scuba Diving, \$70. Accommodations in tent cottages, eco tents, studios or large studios.

St. John Dive Adventures (866) 771-3483, (340)

777-3483 **Web** > www.stjohn-diveadventures.com **Package** > 10-tank package (5 mornings of 2-tank dives), \$380 (without rental gear); \$425 (with rental gear).

St. Thomas

Admiralty Dive Center

(888) 900-3483, (340) 777-9802 **Web** > www.admiralty-dive.com **Package** > 7 nights, 5 days of 2-tank boat dives, \$780 p.p., dbl. occ.; 7th night free. Nitrox specialty course, \$150 with any 6-tank or more package.

Chris Sawyer Diving Center (877) 929-3483, (340) 775-7320 **Web** > www.sawyer-dive.vi **Package** > For dive/hotel packages, we have

many choices, including Grand Beach Palace Resort, Wyndham Sugar Bay Resort and Spa and Point Pleasant Resort. E-mail sawyerdive@islands.vi for rates.

Coki Beach Dive Club

(800) 474-COKI, (340) 775-4220 **Web** > www.cokidive.com **Package** > Discover Scuba Diving, \$60 (equipment included); guided certified tour, \$40 (equipment included).

Dive In! (866) 434-8346, (340) 777-5255 **Web** > www.diveinusvi.com **Package** > 10-dive pass, \$300; your choice of morning or afternoon dives.

St. Thomas Diving Club

(340) 776-2381 **Web** > www.st-thomasdiving.club.com.



A platoon of blackbar soldierfish parade for a photographer off St. Croix.

Live-Aboards

Australia

Great Barrier Reef and Coral Sea

Elizabeth E. Coral

Cruises (011) 61-7-49574281 **Web** > www.elizabeth.com.au **Package** > Whole-boat charter (groups of 14 to 22) for 7 to 14 days, accommodations in twin-berth, air-conditioned cabins with private shower and toilet, meals, snacks, weights, tanks, air fills, day and night dives. Great Barrier Reef from \$290 p.p., per day. Coral Sea from \$340 p.p., per day.

Mike Ball Dive Expeditions / Spoilsport

(800) 952-4319, (011) 61-7-40530500 **Web** > www.mikeball.com **Package** > 6- to 7-dive-day expeditions depart Tuesday from Townsville. Package includes unlimited diving (up to 5 dives daily). Itinerary to the outer Great Barrier Reef, wall diving in the Coral Sea and shark diving at Shark Zoo, plus island tour of Flinders Cay.

Mike Ball Dive Expeditions / Supersport

(800) 952-4319, (011) 61-7-40530500 **Web** > www.mikeball.com **Package** > Minke whale expeditions, depart Cairns, 3 dive days, include meals, snacks, twin or double accommodations, tanks, weights, from AU\$1,257, valid until Dec. 31, 2004.

M/V Nimrod Explorer

(800) 322-3577, (903) 887-8521 **Web** > www.explorerventures.com **Package** > 4- to 11-day diving expeditions, from Cairns to Cooktown and the Far North, including meals and 4 to 5 dives daily, from \$795 p.p.

MV Tusa IV / Tusa Dive Connection

(011) 61-7-40406464 **Web** > www.tusadive.com **Package** > 3-day trips to the Great Barrier Reef in air-conditioned cabins, 3 days of 6-tank dives, 6 outer reef locations, hotel transfers and lunch on board, AU\$405 p.p., valid through March 31, 2005.

Pro Dive Cairns

(011) 61-7-40315255 **Web** > www.prodiver-cairns.com.au **Package** > 3-day, 2-night trip includes accommodations transfers (city and northern beaches), 11 dives, 2 nights' accommodations on board, all meals while on board, bed linens, dive equipment, dive computer, prescription mask if needed, wetsuit, snorkeling equipment, reef taxes, AU\$520 per diver; AU\$430 per snorkeler. Prices subject to change in 2004.

Reef Cruises of Australia

(011) 61-7-04181972 **Web** > www.reefcruises.com.au **Package** > 10-day Cairns to Cape York dive tour includes transfers, accommo-

datations, meals, beverages, diving, wilderness excursions and return airfare from Thursday Island to Cairns over Cape York, \$4,000 p.p., dbl. occ. or twin share. Seasonally available only.

Spirit of Freedom

(011) 61-7-40406450 **Web** > www.spiritoffreedom.com.au **Package** > 3-, 4- and 7-day dive expeditions aboard luxury cruiser depart from Cairns to the Coral Sea and northern Great Barrier Reef, from AU\$950.

Taka Dive Adventures

(011) 61-7-40518722 **Web** > www.takadive.com.au **Package** > 5-day, 4-night Cod Hole and Coral Sea trip departing Friday and returning Tuesday, year-round. All-inclusive package: 14 dives, meals and hotel transfers, from approximately \$800 p.p.

Undersea Explorer

(011) 61-7-40995911 **Web** > www.undersea.com.au **Package** > 6-day expedition to the Great Barrier Reef and Cod Hole, including accommodations in air-conditioned cabins, 20 to 22 dives, tanks, weights, air fills, chef-prepared meals, AU\$2,450 p.p., twin share. Far Northern reef expeditions in November and December are AU\$3,650 p.p. (including GST), twin share, plus AU\$400 p.p. for one-way flight to and from Cairns/Lockhart River.

Bahamas

Abacos

Dream Team Inc. /

Dream Too (888) 277-8181, (561) 848-5375 **Web** > www.advdive.com/ **Package** > 7-day, 6-night trips depart from and return to Palm Beach, Fla. All-inclusive packages: accommodations, meals, diving, weights and tanks, from \$1,195 p.p., spring and summer.

Bimini

Blackbeard's Cruises

(800) 327-9600, (305) 888-1226 **Web** > www.blackbeard-cruises.com **Package** > Departing every Saturday year-round, 7-day trip is priced at \$839 p.p. (\$849 p.p. beginning Jan. 1, 2005), port tax and gratuity not included. Package includes dormitory-style lodging with upper and lower bunks in 3 shared sleeping cabins, diving, tanks, weights, meals, beverages (soda fountain, beer on tap, wine and rum punch).

Paradise Charters, Inc.

(954) 524-8717 **Web** > www.paradisearcharters.com **Package** > Weeklong trip to Bimini and surrounding islands. Package includes 5 instructor-guided dives a day, fishing, snorkeling, meals, snacks, fresh fruit, beverages, and beer or wine with dinner, \$1,400 p.p.

Cay Sal Bank

Sea Fever Diving

Cruises (800) 443-3837 **Web** > www.seafever.com **Package**



> 7-day, 6-night all-inclusive cruise, Bahamas departure fees and taxes, accommodations, diving, meals, snacks, beverages, wine with dinner, beer, steel 80 and 95 tanks, air fills, weights, from \$995 to \$1,262 p.p. in winter; \$1,365 to \$1,470 p.p. in spring and summer.

Exumas

Aqua Cat Cruises (888) 327-9600, (305) 888-3002

Web > www.aquacatcruises.com **Package** > 8-day, 7-night cruise includes up to 5 dives per day, gourmet meals, beverages, bar, transfers and optional activities, \$1,695 p.p., dbl. occ.; 2005 rates: \$1,795 p.p., dbl. occ.

Cat Ppalu Cruises (800) 327-9600, (305) 888-1226

Web > www.catppalu.com **Package** > 7-day, 6-night cruise departing Nassau for the Exuma Cays. All-inclusive package: meals, beverages/bar, diving and lodging. Charter rate is \$12,000 per week September through May and \$13,000 per week June, July and August.

Sea Dragon (954) 522-0161 **Web** > www.seadragonbahamas.com **Package** > Boarding at Nassau, Bahamas, and departing for the Exuma Cays: a one-week trip (6 days of diving, 7 nights on board) includes all prepared meals, diving, tanks, air, weights, belts, 3 to 5 dive sites per day, and shore or beach excursions, \$1,200 p.p., dbl. occ.; 10 percent commission dis-

count for full charters, 9th person free.

Out Islands

Jim Abernethy's Scuba Adventures

(888) 901-3483, (561) 842-6356 **Web** > www.scuba-adventures.com **Package** > Trips to Little Bahama Bank, 7 days, 6 nights, 5 full days and nights of diving, meals, snacks, accommodations, tanks, weights, snorkeling, fishing and wild dolphin encounters, \$1,295 p.p. (maximum of 12 divers).

Nekton Diving Cruises / Nekton Rorqual

(800) 899-6753, (954) 463-9324 **Web** > www.nektoncruises.com **Package** > 7 nights' accommodations, 6 full days of diving, meals, snacks, non-alcoholic beverages, diving, tanks and weights, \$1,495 to \$1,795; Southern Bahamas, \$1,595. Vessel departs from Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

SV Legacy / Windjammer Barefoot Cruises (800) 327-2601, (305) 672-6453 **Web** > www.windjammer.com **Package** > 4-, 5- and 8-day cruises, from \$375, valid until August 2004.

Belize The Atolls

Belize Aggressor III

(800) 348-2628, (985) 385-2628 **Web** > www.aggressor.com **Package** > 7-day cruise to the atolls includes diving, accommodations, meals, local alcohol, \$2,095 p.p., dbl. occ., in deluxe

room; \$2,295 p.p., dbl. occ., in master suite.

Nekton Diving Cruises / Nekton Pilot

(800) 899-6753, (954) 463-9324 **Web** > www.nektoncruises.com **Package** > 7 nights' accommodations, 6 full days of diving, meals, snacks, nonalcoholic beverages, all diving, tanks and weights, \$1,295 to \$1,495.

Peter Hughes, Inc. / Sun Dancer II

(800) 932-6237, (305) 669-9391 **Web** > www.peterhughes.com **Package** > 7-night packages from \$1,495 (plus \$65 port charges and \$15 chamber fee), including meals and beverages (including alcohol), airport transfers, 5 1/2 days of diving (up to 5 dives per day) and other standard Dancer Fleet services and amenities.

Bonaire

SV Legacy / Windjammer Barefoot Cruises

(800) 327-2601, (305) 672-6453 **Web** > www.windjammer.com **Package** > 6-day cruise to Bonaire, Aruba and Curaçao, from \$700, valid until Dec. 6, 2004.

British Virgin Islands

Cuan Law

(800) 648-3393, (284) 494-2490 **Web** > www.bvdiving.com **Package** > 6 nights in 2-person air-conditioned staterooms with private bathrooms, an international chef, diving, watersports and use of the

new spa, \$2,050 p.p.; half price for children in summer.

Promenade Cruises, Ltd.

(800) 526-5503, (284) 499-2756 **Web** > www.yacht-promenade.com **Package** > Day, overnight and term sail dive charters in the British Virgin Islands, includes all cuisine, bar, watersports, and 2 dive instructors. Whole boat charters, 7 nights, 8 days for \$14,900; cabin-only weeks, \$3,400 per cabin.

SV Legacy / Windjammer Barefoot Cruises

(800) 327-2601, (305) 672-6453 **Web** > www.windjammer.com **Package** > 6-day cruises, from \$800, valid Dec. 20, 2004, until May 20, 2005.

California Channel Islands

Diving Charters, Inc. / Sand Dollar

(877) 444-2628, (909) 279 3483 **Web** > www.divingcharters.com or www.diving.net **Package** > 2-day dive trip, including meals, air fills, weight belt, tanks (nitrox and rebreather fills available), from \$259 to \$289 (double and singles available).

Express Divers /

Island Time

(866) 488-3483 **Web** > www.express-divers.com **Package** > All-day charter trip, \$1,700 on weekends, \$1,450 mid-week.

Great Escape Charters

(866) 348-3262 **Web** > www.diveboat.com **Package** > Lobster season opener includes diving, all meals, dives, air, nonalcoholic beverages, \$525.





Liberty (805) 642-6655 Web

> www.westcoastdiver.com/boats/liberty/index.php3

Peace Dive Boat (866)

984-2025, (805) 658-0448

Web > www.peaceboat.com

Package > Thursday special

to Anacapa Island, 3 dives,

food included, \$70 p.p.

Spectre and Explorer

(866) CAL-DIVE, (805) 486-

4486 Web > www.calboat-diving.com

Package >

Saturday and Sunday trip,

includes 2 days' diving and

sleeping on boats.

Truth Aquatics, Inc. /

Truth, Conception and

Vision (805) 962-1127 Web

> www.truthaquatics.com

Package > 2- to 5-day year-round dive trips, including food and nonalcoholic beverages, \$144 p.p., per day.

California San Diego area

Absolute Adventures - Shark Diver (877) 820-

6589, (415) 664-7344 Web >

www.sharkdiver.com Package

> 5-day great white shark

cage diving to Guadalupe

Island includes onboard

accommodations, meals,

snacks, beverages, Mexican

permits, fishing gear and bait,

shark crews and more, \$2,450.

Horizon Charters (858)

277-7823 Web > www.horizoncharters.com

Package > 3

days to the southern Channel

Islands, meals and nonalco-

holic beverages included,

\$450 p.p.; 7-day trip to Baja,

Mexico, scuba and free dive

San Benito Islands, all-inclu-

sive food (excluding alcoholic

beverages), \$1,495 p.p.

San Diego Shark Div-

ing Expeditions, Inc.

(888) 737-4275, (619) 299-

8560 Web > www.sds sharkdiving.com

Package > Trip to

Los Coronados Islands, shark

dive one day and a 2-tank

dive at the Los Coronados

Islands next day. Dive the kelp

beds and with California sea

lions, \$320.

Canada

British Columbia

Nautilus Explorer (888)

4-DIVE-BC, (604) 657-7614

Web > www.nautilusexplorer.com

Package > 7-day, 6-

night Port Hardy trips with

departures from Vancouver,

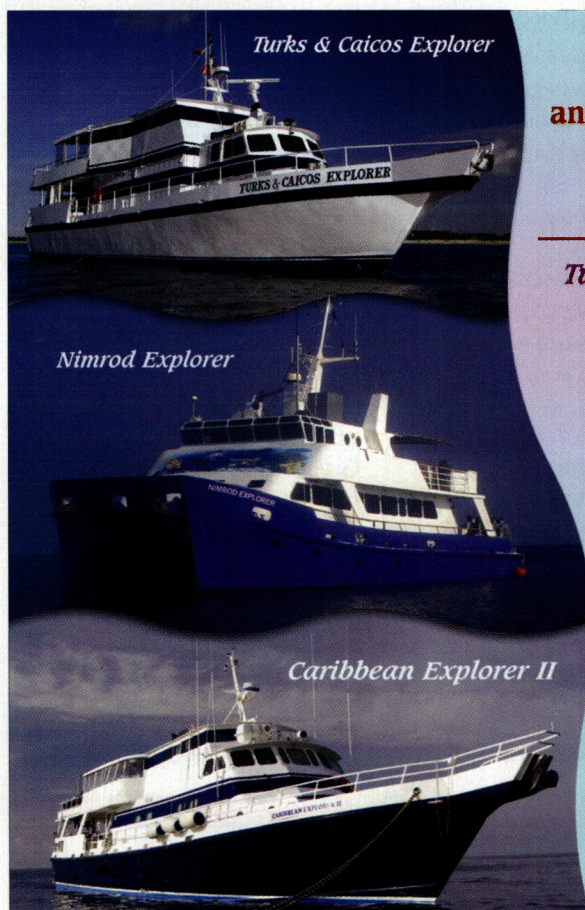
B.C., \$1,195 p.p., dbl. occ.

Cayman Islands

Grand Cayman

Cayman Aggressor IV

(800) 348-2628, (985) 385-



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Fax 1-903-887-8526



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2628 Web > www.aggressor.com Package > 7-day charter includes diving, meals, accommodations and local alcohol, \$1,895 p.p. in twin cabin; \$2,095 p.p. in deluxe cabin. Valid until December 2004.

Costa Rica Cocos Island

Okeanos Aggressor

(800) 348-2628, (985) 385-2628 Web > www.aggressor.com Package > 8-day packages, from \$2,295 p.p., quad. occ.; 10-day packages, from \$2,695 p.p., quad. occ. Valid until December 2004.

Sea Hunter (800) 203-2120, (011) 506-228-6613

Web > www.under-seahunter.com Package > 10-day Cocos trip, includes ground transportation from San Jose to Puntarenas and return, 11-day/10-night cruise with all meals and nonalcoholic drinks, divemaster service, 7 full days of diving, 3 to 4 dives per day with tanks and weights, \$3,245; national park fee additional.

Undersea Hunter (800) 203-2120, (011) 506-228-6613

Web > www.under-seahunter.com Package > 10-day Cocos trip, includes ground transportation from San Jose to Puntarenas and return, 11-day/10-night cruise with all meals and nonalcoholic drinks, divemaster service, 7 full days of diving, 3 to 4 dives per day with tanks and weights, \$3,245; national park fee additional.

Eastern Caribbean

SV Polynesia and SV Yankee Clipper / Windjammer Bare- foot Cruises

(800) 327-2601, (305) 672-6453 Web > www.windjammer.com Package > 6-day trips on the Polynesia to St. Lucia and the Windward Islands, from \$700, valid until Nov. 29, 2004. 6-day trips on the Yankee Clipper departing from Grenada to Bequia and other islands, from \$900, valid until Dec. 20, 2004.

Egypt

Sol Y Mar Fortuna I & II

(011) 202-737-3334 Web > www.travco-eg.com or www.solymar-hotels.com Package > Charters from \$6,000, includes dive guide, coffee, tea and 3 meals.

Camel Dive Club & Hotel

(011) 20-69-600700 Web > www.cameldive.com Package > Full board accommodations, unlimited diving, nonalcoholic drinks, dive guide, tanks, weights, €105 (low season); €110 (high season). All rates are p.p., per night.

Emperor Divers - Live- aboards

(011) 20-69601734 Web > www.emperordivers.com Package > Fleet of 8 live-aboard boats making trips to many locations, with 3-, 5-, 7- or 14-night cruises, from €568.

MY Cyclone, MY Excel and MY Hurricane / Tornado Marine Fleet

(011) 20-012-2171842 Web > www.tornadomarinefleet.com Package > Trips aboard spacious live-aboards with air-conditioned interiors, sun decks and well-designed dive decks, from €775.

Fiji

Blue Lagoon Cruises & Westside Water- sports

(011) 679-666-1622 Web > www.bluelagooncruises.com or www.cruiseinluxury-diveinparadise.com Package > 7 days' accommodations, 6 nights, all diving (up to 15 dives), all meals, activities, cultural experiences, from \$1,499 per diver, plus value-added tax; \$999 per nondiver, plus value-added tax; both prices based on twin share.

Fiji Aggressor II (800) 348-2628, (985) 385-2628

Web > www.aggressor.com Package > Saturday-to-Saturday, 7-day charters are \$2,395 p.p., dbl. occ., deluxe room; \$2,595 p.p., dbl. occ., master suite.

Nai'a Fiji (866) 776-5572, (011) 679-345-0382 Web > www.naia.com.fj Package > All-inclusive packages, include transfers, tax and an extra full dive day each charter, \$2,700 (7 days); \$3,850 (10 days).

Sere-Ni-Wai (011) 679-336-1171 Web > www.sere.com.fj Package > 10 nights, all-inclusive, \$2,400.

Florida Keys

Dry Tortugas

Playmate / Sea-Clu-

sive Charters (305) 744-9928 Web > www.seaclusive.com Package > All meals, snacks, iced tea or lemonade, accommodations, dive tanks, air fills, weights, \$250 p.p., per day, 8-guest minimum.

French Polynesia

Tahiti Aggressor

(800) 348-2628, (985) 385-2628 Web > www.aggressor.com Package > 7-day cruise, includes diving, meals, accommodations, local alcohol and TDI drift diving course for \$2,395 p.p., dbl. occ., in double room; \$2,595 p.p., dbl. occ., in deluxe room.

Galapagos

Deep Blue Yacht / Galapagos Adven- tures

(866) 626-8272, (561) 393-4752 Web > www.galapagosadventures.com Deep Blue Package > 8 days and 7 nights, 2 nights' accommodations in mainland Ecuador (10 days, 9 nights total), round-trip airfare from mainland Ecuador to Galapagos, airport transfers, all meals while on board the yacht and all tours, \$2,595 p.p., dbl. occ.

Galapagos Aggressor I and Galapagos

Aggressor II (800) 348-2628, (985) 385-2628 Web > www.aggressor.com Package > 7-day package includes diving, meals, accommodations, local alcohol, \$2,895 p.p., dbl. occ.
Lammer Law (800) 648-





3393, (284) 494-2490 **Web** > www.galapagosdiving.com
Package > 7 to 10 nights, including all food and diving and services of 7 crew and 2 naturalist dive guides. 2-person staterooms, twin or queen, with own bathroom and individual air-conditioning. Land visits and kayaks included. Prices from \$2,425 p.p.
Peter Hughes, Inc. / Sky Dancer (800) 932-6237, (305) 669-9391 **Web** > www.peterhughes.com **Package** > 7-night package from \$2,695 (plus \$100 park fee and \$35 chamber fee). Package includes 7 nights on board, all

meals and beverages (including alcohol), airport transfers, 5 1/2 days of diving (up to 4 dives per day), land excursions in the central islands and other standard Dancer Fleet services and amenities.

Hawaii The Big Island

Kona Aggressor II (800) 348-2628, (985) 385-2628
Web > www.aggressor.com
Package > 7-day package includes diving, accommodations, meals and local alcohol, \$1,995 p.p., dbl. occ.; \$1,795 p.p., quad. occ. Valid until December 2004.

Honduras Roatan

Bay Islands Aggressor

IV (800) 348-2628, (985) 385-2628 **Web** > www.aggressor.com **Package** > 7-day cruise, includes diving, accommodations, meals and local alcohol for \$1,495, p.p., dbl. occ., in deluxe; \$1,695 p.p., dbl. occ., in master, October through December 2004. \$1,995 p.p., dbl. occ., in deluxe room; \$2,195 p.p., dbl. occ., in master suite, April through September 2004.

Indonesia Aquasports Co. Ltd.

(888) 996-2782, (011) 662-662-1417 **Web** > www.dive-aquasports.com **Package** > June-October: 7 nights on board, diving in Komodo, \$1,770 p.p., dbl. occ. Package includes 4 dives per day, all meals and beverages.
Dive Asia Pacific / MY Pelagian (800) 962-0395, (954) 229-8022 **Web** > www.diveasiapacific.com.
DiveKomodo (011) 62-361-728-878 **Web** > www.divekomodo.com **Package** > 7 nights, 8 days, \$1,755, including return domestic airfare from Bali, transfers, full board, diving, all



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services of the live-aboard, weights and tanks.

Grand Komodo Tours & Dives (888) 996-2782, (011) 62-361-287-166 **Web** >

www.komodoalordive.com

Package > 2004 packages start at \$175 p.p., dbl. occ., per day, including 3 to 4 dives per day and all meals.

Mimpi Dive Cruises

(011) 62-41-850-230 **Web** >

www.mimpicruises.com **Package** >

5 nights in Hotel Santika economy room, 4 nights in Pulisan Jungle Beach Resort, 15 dives with Thalassa Dive Resort, 5 nights and

6 days on *Mimpi* and unlimited diving, all transfers and all meals \$1,415 p.p., dbl. occ.

Peter Hughes, Inc. / Komodo Dancer (800) 932-6237, (305) 669-9391

Web > www.peterhughes.com **Package** >

7-night package includes accommodations on board, all meals and beverages (including alcohol), airport transfers, 5

1/2 days of diving (up to 4 dives per day), a visit to

Komodo Island and other standard Dancer Fleet services and amenities, from

\$1,845 (plus \$90 park fee).

Maldives

Manthiri Maldives

(877) 357-0022, (360) 387-5582 **Web** >

www.manthiri.com **Package** >

Peak season, \$40 off per night through May 2004.

Sea Explorers Associates Ptv. Ltd (011) 960-316-172 **Web** >

www.seamaldives.com.mv.

Mexico

Baja

Baja Expeditions, Inc. / Don Jose (800) 843-6967, (858) 581-3311 **Web** >

www.bajaex.com **Package** >

Weeklong live-aboard expeditions in Baja's Sea of

Manthiri Maldives

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www.manthiri.com **Package** >

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Mexico

Baja

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www.bajaex.com **Package** >

Weeklong live-aboard expeditions in Baja's Sea of

Cortez, including unlimited diving, night dives, all meals while on board, accommodations in above-deck, air-conditioned staterooms (dbl. and triple occ.). Price for standard room is \$1,445 p.p.; \$1,645 p.p. in deluxe rooms. Season runs June through November.

Nautilus Explorer / Lever Diving (888) 4-DIVE-BC, (604) 657-7614 **Web** >

www.nautilusexplorer.com **Package** >

8-day, 7-night departures from La Paz to the Sea of Cortez, including sperm whale trips. Stateroom accommodations,



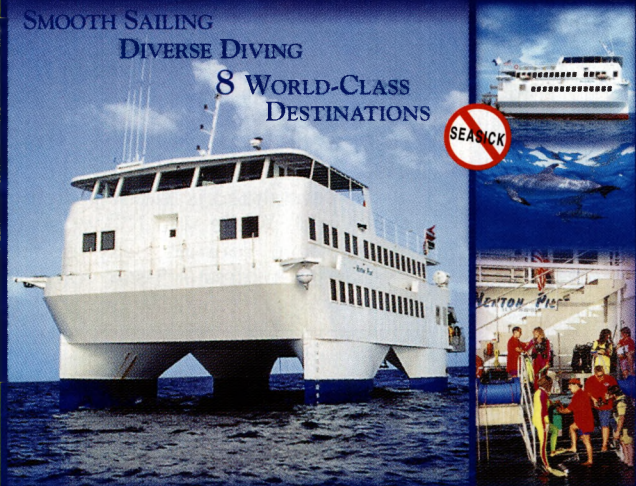
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\$1,695 p.p., dbl. occ.

Solmar V (800) 344-3349, (310) 459-9861 **Web** > www.solmar.com **Package** > Sea of Cortez trip, 7 nights, 8 days, starting at \$1,995, plus tax.

Socorro Islands

Nautilus Explorer / Lever Diving (888) 4-DIVE-BC, (604) 657-7614 **Web** > www.nautilusexplorer.com **Package** > 9 nights, 10 days, peak season departures from Cabo San Lucas to the Socorro Islands and the Revillagigedo Archipelago, 6 1/2 days of diving, stateroom accommodations, \$2,495 p.p., dbl. occ. **Solmar V** (800) 344-3349, (310) 459-9861 **Web** > www.solmar.com **Package** > Socorro Islands trip, 8 nights, 9 days, starting at \$2,895, plus tax.

Micronesia Palau

Ocean Hunter I and Ocean Hunter II (011) 680-488-2637 **Web** > www.oceanhunter.com **Package** > 7 days of unlimited diving aboard the motor sailer *Ocean Hunter I*, gourmet food, diving from the main boat, \$2,695 p.p.; 7 days of unlimited diving aboard the *Ocean Hunter II*, gourmet food, diving from the main boat, \$2,495 p.p. **Palau Aggressor II** (800) 348-2628, (985) 385-2628 **Web** > www.aggressor.com **Package** > 7-day package includes diving, accommoda-

tions, meals and local alcohol, \$2,495 p.p., dbl. occ., in deluxe; \$2,295 p.p., dbl. occ., in double.

Truk Lagoon (Chuuk)

Odyssey Adventures (800) 757-5396, (904) 346-3766 **Web** > www.trukodyssey.com **Package** > Sunday to Sunday cruises, 5 1/2 days diving, includes meals, beverages, nitrox and airport transfers, \$2,395.

S.S. Thorfinn / Seaward Holidays Micronesia, Inc. (011) 691-330-3040 **Web** > www.thorfinn.net **Package** > 5 dives per day, 7 full dive days per week, luxury accommodations, airport transfers, applicable taxes for \$1,395 per week. On board meal and beverage packages including all meals, between-dive snacks, tea/coffee/cocoa, soft drinks, beer, dinner wine, and local taxes, \$395 per week. Prorated daily extensions before or after trips are available as space permits.

Truk Aggressor II (800) 348-2628, (985) 385-2628 **Web** > www.aggressor.com **Package** > 7-day package, includes diving, accommodations, meals and local alcohol for \$2,295 p.p., dbl. occ.; \$1,095 p.p., quad. occ. Fall 2004 group special: 11 paying earns 3 free spots.

New Zealand Diveboard New

Zealand Limited (011) 649-445-3225 **Web** > www.divecharters.co.nz **Package** > 4 days, all-inclusive to the Poor Knights Islands and Bay of Islands, New Zealand. Unlimited diving, onboard chef and New Zealand wine, NZ\$19,000 to charter the entire boat (up to 7 berths).

Papua New Guinea

Aquaventures PNG, Ltd. (011) 675-852-2023 **Web** > aquaventures-png.com.

Blue Sea Charters / MV Moonlighting I and MV Moonlighting II (011) 675-852-2300 **Web** > www.blueseacharters.com

Package > Rates are AU\$395 p.p., per night for rooms with private en suites and AU\$350 p.p., per night for rooms with share facilities. Package includes meals, unlimited diving, tanks, weights, airport transfers. Group discounts. *Scuba Diving* readers get a 5 percent discount.

Mike Ball Dive Expeditions / Paradise Sport (800) 952-4319, (011) 61-7-40530500 **Web** > www.mikeball.com **Package** >

Departs from Kavieng, 9 dive days, all cabins are en suite and have ocean views, unlimited diving, wall, wreck and shark diving, from AU\$3,664, valid until Dec. 31, 2004.

MV Golden Dawn / Telita Dive Adventures (011) 675-3211-860 **Web** > www.telitadive.com

Package > Milne Bay expeditions, prices start from \$275 p.p., per night.

Niugini Diving Adventures (675) 854-1317 **Web** > www.mtspng.com **Package** > 7 nights' resort accommodations, including 6 morning dives, 2 tanks each, 2 night dives, all meals, 2 land tours and diving, and 10 percent GST, for minimum of 2, \$1,000 p.p.

Puerto Rico Nekton Diving Cruises

(800) 899-6753, (954) 463-9324 **Web** > www.nekton-cruises.com **Package** > 7 nights' accommodations, 6 full days of diving, all meals, snacks and nonalcoholic beverages, all diving, tanks and weights. Isla Mona trip, \$1,495 to \$1,295.

Saba

M/V Caribbean Explorer II (800) 322-3577, (903) 887-8521 **Web** > www.explorerventures.com **Package** > 7-night, 8-day packages priced from \$1,395 p.p., including meals, diving, and accommodations. \$250 savings p.p. in September-December.

Solomon Islands

MV Bilikiki and MV Spirit of Solomons (800) 663-5363, (705) 363-2049 **Web** > www.bilikiki.com **Package** > 2004 rates: 7 nights, including hotel or airport transfers in Honiara, on-



board accommodations in deluxe air-conditioned double/twin share stateroom or cabin with private toilet facilities, all onboard meals and snacks, unlimited diving, use of weights, belt, tanks and air fills, government bed tax, \$2,086. 9-, 12- and 14-night trips also available.

St. Kitts & Nevis

SV Polynesia / Windjammer Barefoot Cruises (800) 327-2601, (305) 672-6453 **Web** > www.windjammer.com **Package** > 6- and 13-day cruises, December and January. Complimentary 2-tank dive, plus discounts for divers.

Thailand

A-One-Diving (011) 77-832-984 **Web** > www.a-one-diving.com **Package** > Live-aboard trips to Surin, Similan, Mergui Archipelago and Burma Banks, from 2 to 6 days, THB9,000 to THB32,500.

Aquasports Co. Ltd. (888) 996-2782, (011) 662-662-1417 **Web** > www.dive-aquasports.com **Package** > November-May: 7 nights on board, diving in the Andaman Sea, \$1,860 p.p., dbl. occ. Package includes 4 dives per day, all meals and beverages. Park fee, alcoholic beverages, nitrox and E-6 processing are not included.

Dive Asia / MV Dive Asia (011) 667-633-0598 **Web** > www.diveasia.com

Package > Similan Islands cruise, 4 nights, \$570 p.p. in twin-share cabin.

Divesimilan.com (011) 661-891-6036 **Web** > divesimilan.com **Package** > E-mail info@divesimilan.com for rates on a variety of live-aboards. **High Class Adventure** (011) 667-642-0612 **Web** > www.highclass-adventure.com

Package > 7 days to Burma and Thailand, \$1,300.

June Hong Chian Lee / The Junk Live-aboard Co. (011) 667-634-2186 **Web** > www.thejunk.com **Package** > 5 days, 6 nights to the Similan Islands and Richelieu Rock, including all meals, unlimited diving, \$1,050 p.p.

Kingfisher Diving Co., Ltd. (011) 667-634-0625

Web > www.kingfisherdiving.com **Package** > 3 and 4 days' live-aboard trip to Surin and Similan. 3 days, THB15,000; 4 days, THB19,800. Packages include diving, tanks, weight, weight belt, all meals, drinking water, tea, coffee, hot chocolate, fruits and some snacks.

MV Discovery / Santana Diving Co., Ltd.

(011) 667-629-4220 **Web** > www.santanaphuket.com **Package** > 8 days, 9 nights to the 9 Similan Islands, Koh Bon, Koh Tachai, Richelieu Rock, the Burma Banks and Mergui Archipelago, €990, including accommodations in air-conditioned twin bed cabins, full board, coffee, tea, drinking water, 3 dives daily and 1 night dive, tanks,

weights, divemaster service (max. 4 divers per group).

Ocean Rover Cruises

(011) 667-628-1388 **Web** > www.ocean-rover.com **Package** > 8 days, 9 nights to the Andaman Sea and Myanmar itinerary, including all meals and nonalcoholic beverages, \$2,240 p.p., plus \$150 post and park fees.

Scuba Quest Live-aboards (011) 667-629-

2874 **Web** > www.scuba-quest.de **Package** > 7 days, 8 nights, includes accommodations, air-conditioned minibus from hotels or airport on Phuket Island to the boat and return, all meals, soft drinks, drinking water, coffee and tea, divemaster service, dive platform service, tanks, weights, \$1,680 p.p., dbl. occ.

Siam Dive 'n Sail (011) 667-633-0967 **Web** >

siamdivers.com **Package** > 3- to 7-day Thailand or Burma trips, double and single cabins (not en suite), starting at \$400 p.p.; 7-day, 8-night cruises to the Mergui Archipelago in Burma, starting at \$1,680 p.p. 4 days to Similan and Richelieu Rock, starting at \$699 p.p. Includes en suite air-conditioned cabins, all meals, divemaster services, most drinks and hotel pickup.

South East Asia Live-aboards Co., Ltd. (011)

667-634-0932 **Web** > www.seal-asia.com **Package** > 6 days', 7 nights' cruise to the Mergui Archipelago, Myanmar (Burma), including the Burma Banks, includes

diving, onboard accommodations, meals and soft drinks, \$1,350 p.p., plus \$140 for Myanmar visa and entry permit. Excludes flights, hotel accommodations, gear rental and alcohol.

Tobago

Peter Hughes Diving Inc. / Wind Dancer

(800) 932-6237, (305) 669-9391 **Web** > www.peterhughes.com **Package** > 7-night package from \$1,495 (plus \$65 port charge), including all meals and beverages (including alcohol), airport transfers, 5 1/2 days of diving (up to 5 dives per day), and other standard Dancer Fleet services and amenities.

Turks & Caicos

Provo

Turks & Caicos

Aggressor II (800) 348-2628, (985) 385-2628 **Web** > www.aggressor.com **Package** > 7-day diving packages start at \$1,395 p.p., quad. occ.; \$2,095 p.p., dbl. occ.; whale charters add \$200.

Turks & Caicos Explorer

(800) 322-3577, (903) 887-8521 **Web** > www.explorer-ventures.com **Package** > 7-night, 8-day expeditions from Provo to West Caicos and French Cay. Prices from \$1,395 p.p., dbl. occ., including meals, diving and alcoholic beverages. Save \$200 September-December.





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Those who love diving often dream of finding a job where scuba is a main part of every work week, rather than just a part of one or two vacations a year. Those jobs are there and waiting for those who are willing to pursue the training to qualify for them. Whether it's work in recreational or commercial diving, there is definitely a way to take a job in diving and love it!

Recreational Diving: Teaching, Diving, & Much More

Whether it's through a local dive shop or at some far-flung dive resort, divemasters, instructors, and other recreational diving professionals are generally the first and most frequent links between the public and the underwater world. Whether it happens just around the corner or all the



way around the world, a career in recreational diving offers a wide range of possibilities.

The opportunities include: many levels of instruction; guiding dives; day-boat staff work; live-aboard staff; shop employment in various capacities; marketing; photography; videography; writing; and so much more. Many of these opportunities are only available to those with proper training. However, you don't even have to be certified to begin training for a career in diving. Most schools can get you started no matter where you are on the certification ladder.

The schools vary in terms of school locations, training waters and boats used, types of programs offered, length and intensity of programs, home study possibilities, class size, instructor-to-student ratios, on-the-job experience opportunities (at real-life dive resorts); placement services, and more. It's wise to contact several to make the best choice for your particular circumstances and goals.

Today's programs concentrate on real-world skills to go with the textbook, pool, and open water education. This is important, in that knowing what to expect in an actual dive business is a crucial step in being prepared to work in the recreational diving industry. Career development can be an important part of schooling, even before graduation. Those who hire graduates of these schools like to see employees who can hit the ground running and the water swimming

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With proper education completed, the opportunities are almost endless. Several schools even offer a lifetime job placement guarantee! From conducting certification classes to running a dive operation, a diploma from one of these schools opens the door to a whole new life for you.

Commercial Diving: Water Works

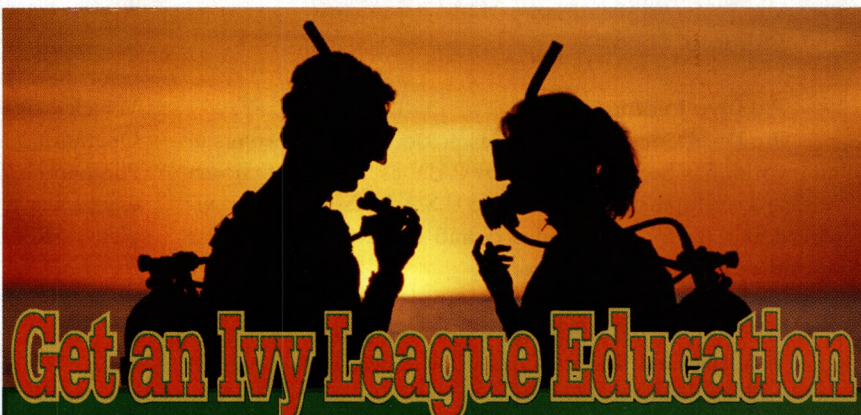
There's almost always a demand for workers in commercial diving. The opportunities include, but aren't limited to: underwater construction; marine environmental control testing; operation of one atmospheric suits; platform construction, maintenance, and removal; drilling and blasting; salvage; seismic surveying; line installation and maintenance; trenching; underwater surveys; gravity surveying; oil rig work; using remotely controlled underwater vehicles; diving bell usage and maintenance; wellhead repair and maintenance; many medical fields; hyperbaric chamber work; and more.

The list of job locations is as varied as the job opportunities, with the Gulf of Mexico, the South Pacific, the Mediterranean, and the North Sea just a few of the worldwide possibilities. It's just a matter of getting the right education — and that means finding the right school.

Commercial diving education, by its very nature, is more intense and longer than most recreational diving programs. This includes not just up-to-date theory and classroom work, but also hands-on knowledge and experience concerning specific underwater problem solving and work. The higher level of required training and experience often means higher compensation.

In the dynamic field of commercial diving, you must be well-versed in current theory and have hands-on knowledge. Employees and contractors expect their divers to be well-trained in a variety of specialties. That's where schools with good programs—and job placement help—are a great investment in time and money.

Schools in the commercial diving field report that job opportunities are better than ever. With a wide range of specialized courses and programs, it's easy to find a specific field of interest, pursue the training, and then start your new career.

Get an Ivy League Education

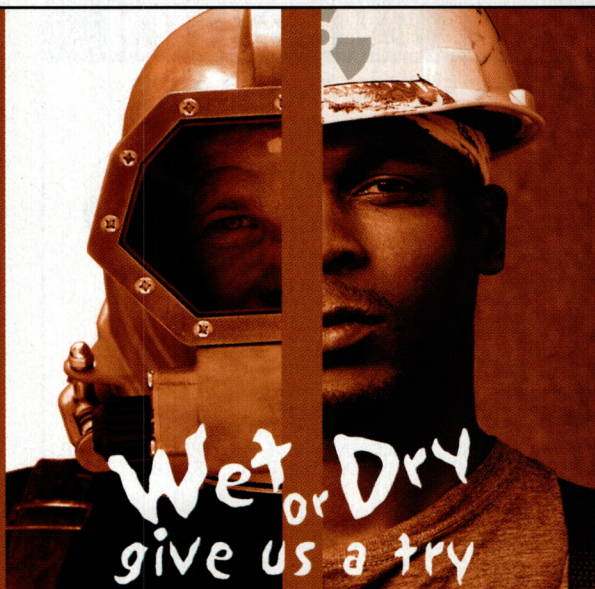
If you'd like to take your love of scuba diving and turn it into a job, then Pro Dive® should be your school of choice! Located right on the beach in Fort Lauderdale, Pro Dive was the first PADI Career Development Center in the world and PADI now recognizes us as the "most chosen Career Development Center in the U.S.A." Pro Dive offers students Ivy League class training in a real-world diving environment. And with dedicated job placement, Pro Dive's placement director can be counted on to match you with the perfect job!

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Scuba Emporium

Scuba Emporium has served the Chicago metropolitan area longer than any other dive center. Founded in 1974, Scuba Emporium is the oldest licensed facility in Illinois offering entry level through instructor programs, and was the first PADI Career Development Center in the Midwest. Scuba Emporium's two PADI 5-Star IDC centers both have swimming pools. With three course directors, a full-time staff, and on-site training pools, you can earn any rating at any time. Instructor training is also offered in the warm-weather climates of Mesa, Arizona; Jamaica; St. Lucia and Bonaire.

Phone 800-778-DIVE, fax 708-301-0293, Patrick@scubaemporium.com, www.scubaemporium.com

Commercial Schools

The Ocean Corporation

Founded in 1969, The Ocean Corporation is located on a 4.2 acre campus in Houston, Texas, close to the hub of the world diving industry, the Gulf of Mexico. Training includes the Ultimate Diver Training course, which meets or exceeds the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standards for entry-level commercial divers. This course also qualifies graduates for other careers, including Hazardous Materials, Non-Destructive Testing/Inspection, and Remotely Operated Vehicles. The school offers 30-week classes, and a new class starts every five weeks.

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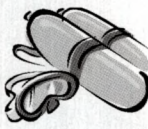
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REASON #2--The views! Every room offers an incredible view of the turquoise Caribbean Sea. You'll also have a balcony or patio to enjoy the sea breezes and sunsets.

REASON #3--The room features! The rooms are junior suites, with living areas, a wet bar, in-room refrigerator, satellite TV, individually controlled air-conditioning, marble baths, and a delightful tropical feel. Plaza Las Glorias also offers a private beach, an oceanside freshwater pool (with swim-up bar and whirlpool tub), a

very popular outdoor palapa restaurant and bar, and a formal restaurant. New for 2004: for a reasonable charge, you can add all meals and an unlimited bar.

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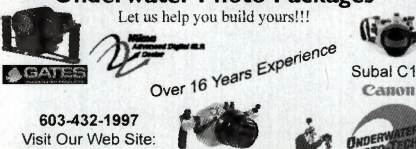


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Continued from page 112

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Continued from page 114

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LOOK



SPOTTED EAGLE AND GOLDEN COWNOSE RAYS, Cousins Rock, Galapagos Islands.

A man and a woman are shown from the waist up, wearing black and grey Henderson wetsuits. The man is on the left, looking down, and the woman is on the right, looking towards the camera. The background is a red and black checkered pattern.

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